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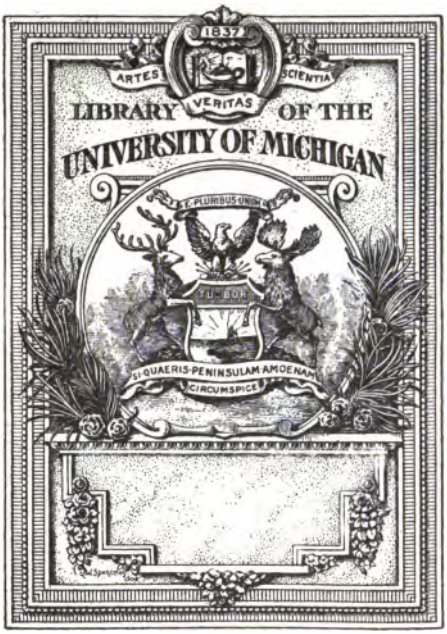
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THE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS;

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

AND

A CRITICISM ON HIS WRITINGS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE CHARACTER AND CONDITION OF

THE SCOTTISH PEASANTRY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

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1806.

VOL. IV.

CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

MR. GEORGE THOMSON,

INCLUDING

POETRY,

HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED OR UNCOLLECTED.

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PREFACE.

THE first and principal part of the ensuing Volume, consists of the Correspondence between Mr. BURNS and Mr. THOMSON, on the subject of the beautiful Work projected and executed by the latter, the nature of which is explained in the first number of the following series.* The undertaking of Mr. Thomson, is one

* This work is entitled, "*A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs, for the Voice; to which are added, Introductory and concluding Symphonies and Accompaniments for the Piano Forte and Violin, by Pleyel and Kozeluch; with select and characteristic Verses, by the most admired Scottish Poets,*" &c.——London, printed and sold by PRESTON, No, 97, Strand.

one in which the Public may be congratulated in various points of view; not merely as having collected the finest of the Scottish songs and airs of past times, but as having given occasion to a number of original songs of our Bard, which equal or surpass the former efforts of the pastoral muses of Scotland, and which, if we mistake not, may be safely compared with the lyric poetry of any age or country. The letters of Mr. Burns to Mr. Thomson include the songs he presented to him, some of which appear in different stages of their progress; and these letters will be found to exhibit occasionally his notions of song-writing, and his opinions on various subjects of taste and criticism. These opinions, it will be observed, were called forth by the observations of his correspondent, Mr. Thomson; and without the letters of this gentleman, those of Burns would have been often unintelligible. He has therefore yielded to the earnest request of the Trustees of the family of the Poet, to suffer them to appear in their natural order; and, independently of the illustration they give to the letters of our Bard, it is not to be doubted that their intrinsic merit will

will ensure them a reception from the Public, far beyond what Mr. Thomson's modesty would permit him to suppose. The whole of this correspondence was arranged for the press by Mr. Thomson, and has been printed with little addition or variation.

To this are added, the greater number of the songs furnished by our Bard for Mr. Johnson's publication, entitled, "*The Scots Musical Museum*," (*See p.* 269) and such other of his poems, not before published, as seemed not unworthy of seeing the light.

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CORRESPONDENCE,

&c.

No. I.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, September, 1792.

SIR,

FOR some years past, I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favourite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private. To render this work perfect, we are desirous to have the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so in many instances, is allowed by every

one conversant with our musical collections. The editors of these seem in general to have depended on the music proving an excuse for the verses; and hence, some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggerel, while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate, as cannot be sung in decent company. To remove this reproach, would be an easy task to the author of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be enabled to present the Public with a collection infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared, and acceptable to all persons of taste, whether they wish for correct melodies, delicate accompaniments, or characteristic verses.—We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication. Tell me frankly, then, whether you will devote your leisure to writing twenty or twenty-five songs, suited to the particular melodies which I am prepared to send you. A few songs, exceptionable only in some of their verses, I will likewise submit to your consideration; leaving it to you, either to mend these, or make new songs in their stead. It is superfluous to assure you that I have no intention to displace any

of

of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed, which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent. Even these shall all be examined by Mr. Burns, and if *he* is of opinion that any of them are deserving of the music, in such cases no divorce shall take place.

Relying on the letter accompanying this, to be forgiven for the liberty I have taken in addressing you, I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

G. THOMSON.

No. II.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

Dumfries, 16th Sept. 1792.

SIR,

I HAVE just this moment got your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. Only, don't hurry me: "Deil tak the hindmost" is by no means the *cri de guerre* of

my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs, with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me. You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers, to approve, or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication. Apropos! if you are for *English* verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue. English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. *Tweedside; Ah! the poor shepherd's mournful fate! Ah! Chloris, could I now but sit*, &c. you cannot mend; but such insipid stuff as, *To Fanny fair could I impart*, &c. usually set to *The Mill, Mill O*, is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the farther prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say, amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself at least think that I amend.

As

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright *prostitution of soul!* A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the wark!"

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

R. BURNS.

P. S. I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

No. III.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 13*th Oct.* 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED, with much satisfaction, your pleasant and obliging letter, and I return my warmest acknowledgments for the enthusiasm with which you have entered into our undertaking. We have now no doubt of being able to produce

produce a collection highly deserving of public attention in all respects.

I agree with you in thinking *English* verses, that have merit, very eligible, wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes every year, more and more, the language of Scotland; but, if you mean that no English verses, except those by Scottish authors, ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but, if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reject such, merely because the authors were born south of the Tweed? Our sweet air, *My Nanie O*, which in the collections is joined to the poorest stuff that Allan Ramsay ever wrote, beginning, *While some for pleasure pawn their health*, answers so finely to Dr. Percy's beautiful song, *O Nancy wilt thou go with me*, that one would think he wrote it on purpose for the air. However, it is not at all our wish to confine you to English verses; you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover, we will patiently wait your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse

may

may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits: simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but, in some of our songs, the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity; although, between the one and the other, as Dr. Beattie well observes, there is as great a difference as between a plain suit of clothes and a bundle of rags. The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting indeed in all songs than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions, and flowery fancies.

With these trite observations, I send you eleven of the songs, for which it is my wish to substitute others of your writing. I shall soon transmit the rest, and, at the same time, a prospectus of the whole collection: and you may believe we will receive any hints that you are so kind as to give for improving the work, with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.

I remain, Dear Sir, &c.

No. IV.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

LET me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have *all but one* the faults you remark in them; but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better? For instance, on reading over *The Lea-rig*, I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which Heaven knows is poor enough:

When o'er the hill the eastern star,
  Tells bughtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrow'd field,
  Return sae dowf and weary O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks*
  Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
  My ain kind dearie O.

In

* For "scented birks," in some copies, "birken buds." E.

In mirkest glen, at midnight hour,
I'd rove, and ne'er be eerie O,
If thro' that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie O.
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wild,*
And I were ne'er sae wearie O,
I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie O.

Your

---

* In the copy transmitted to Mr. Thomson, instead of *wild*, was inserted *wet*. But in one of the manuscripts, probably written afterwards, wet was changed into wild; evidently a great improvement. The lovers might meet on the lea-rig, "although the night were ne'er so *wild*," that is, although the summer-wind blew, the sky lowred, and the thunder murmured: such circumstances might render their meeting still more interesting. But if the night were actually wet, why should they meet on the lea-rig? On a wet night, the imagination cannot contemplate their situation there with any complacency.—Tibullus, and after him Hammond, has conceived a happier situation for lovers on a wet night. Probably Burns had in his mind the verse of an old Scottish song, in which *wet* and *weary* are naturally enough conjoined.

"When my ploughman comes hame at ev'n,
He's often wet and weary;
Cast off the wet, put on the dry,
And gae to bed, my deary." E.

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr. Percy's ballad to the air *Nanie O*, is just. It is besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that, in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs, there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honor, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve, or reject, as you please) that my ballad of *Nanie O* might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head, that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at, in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my *Nanie O*, the name of the river is horridly prosaic. I will alter it,

"Behind yon hills where *Lugar* flows."

Girvan

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Good be wi' ye, &c.

Friday night.

. . . . . .

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you *Nanie O* at length. *(v. vol.* iii. *p.* 277.)

Your remarks on *Ewe-bughts, Marion*, are just: still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and what, with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of *Ewe-bughts;* but it will

will fill up this page. You must know, that all my earlier love songs were the breathings of ardent passion, and though it might have been easy in after-times to have given them a polish, yet that polish, to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their *race*.

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across th' Atlantic's roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the Heavens to my Mary,
I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And sae may the Heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour, and the moment o' time!*

Galla Water, and *Auld Rob Morris*, I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on *my verses*, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplying bigot of *opiniâtreté*, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

No. V.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

November 8th, 1792.

If you mean, my dear Sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the

* This song Mr. Thomson has not adopted in his collection. It deserves however to be preserved. E.

the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the *feature notes* of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, *My wife's a wanton wee thing*, if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following were made extempore to it; and though, on farther study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

I never saw a fairer,
I never loe'd a dearer,
And niest my heart I'll wear her
For fear my jewel tine.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
Wi' her I'll blythly bear it,
And think my lot divine.

. . . . . .

I have just been looking over the *Collier's bonny Dochter;* and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss ——, as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the *Collier Lassie*, fall on and welcome.

O saw ye bonnie Lesley
As she gaed o'er the border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we, before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The

The Deil he could na scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

The powers aboon will tent thee;
Misfortune sha'na steer thee;
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.

Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag, we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.

. . . . . .

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic airs, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. Farewell, &c.

No. VI.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune, "KATHARINE OGIE."

YE banks, and braes, and streams around,
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfald her robes,
And there the langest tarry:
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay, green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom;
As underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' mony a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But Oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And clos'd for ay, the sparkling glance,
That dwalt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core,
Shall live my Highland Mary.

. . . . . .

14th November, 1792.

MY DEAR SIR,

I AGREE with you that the song, *Katharine Ogie*, is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it, but the awkward sound *Ogie* recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The

The foregoing song pleases myself; I think it is in my happiest manner; you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days; and, I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart, that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of *Auld Rob Morris*. I have adopted the two first verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan, which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet-lug; and do you, *sans ceremonie*, make what use you choose of the productions. Adieu! &c.

No. VII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, Nov. 1792.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS just going to write to you, that on meeting with your *Nanie* I had fallen violently in love with her. I thank you, therefore, for

sending the charming rustic to me, in the dress you wish her to appear before the public. She does you great credit, and will soon be admitted into the best company.

I regret that your song for the *Lea-rig* is so short; the air is easy, soon sung, and very pleasing; so that, if the singer stops at the end of two stanzas, it is a pleasure lost ere it is well possessed.

Although a dash of our native tongue and manners is doubtless peculiarly congenial, and appropriate to our melodies, yet I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very Flowers of English Song, well adapted to those melodies, which in England at least will be the means of recommending them to still greater attention than they have procured there. But you will observe, my plan is, that every air shall in the first place have verses wholly by Scottish poets; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.

What you say of the *Ewe-bughts* is just; I admire it, and never meant to supplant it. All I requested was, that you would try your hand on some of the inferior stanzas, which are apparently no part of the original song; but this I do not urge, because the song is of sufficient length though those inferior stanzas be omitted, as they will be

by

by the singer of taste. You must not think I expect *all* the songs to be of superlative merit; that were an unreasonable expectation. I am sensible that no poet can sit down doggedly to pen verses, and succeed well at all times.

I am highly pleased with your humorous and amorous rhapsody on *Bonnie Leslie;* it is a thousand times better than the *Collier's Lassie.* "The "deil he cou'd na scaith thee," &c. is an eccentric and happy thought. Do you not think, however, that the names of such old heroes as Alexander, sound rather queer, unless in pompous or mere burlesque verse? Instead of the line "And never made anither," I would humbly suggest, "And ne'er made sic anither;" and I would fain have you substitute some other line for "Return to Caledonie," in the last verse, because I think this alteration of the orthography, and of the sound of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic.

Of the other song, *My wife's a winsome wee thing*, I think the first eight lines very good: but I do not admire the other eight, because four of them are a bare repetition of the first verse. I have been trying to spin a stanza, but could make nothing better than the following: do you mend it, or as Yorick did with the love-letter, whip it up in your own way.

O leeze

O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonnie blythsome wee thing;
Sae lang's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.
Tho' warld's care we share o't,
And may see meickle mair o't,
Wi' her I'll blythly bear it,
And ne'er a word repine.

. . . . . .

You perceive, my dear Sir, I avail myself of the liberty, which you condescend to allow me, by speaking freely what I think. Be assured, it is not my disposition to pick out the faults of any poem or picture I see: my first and chief object is to discover and be delighted with the beauties of the piece. If I sit down to examine critically, and at leisure, what perhaps you have written in haste, I may happen to observe careless lines, the re-perusal of which might lead you to improve them. The wren will often see what has been overlooked by the eagle.

I remain yours faithfully, &c.

P. S. Your verses upon Highland Mary, are just come to hand: they breathe the genuine spirit of poetry, and, like the music, will last for ever.

Such verses united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo himself. I have heard the sad story of your Mary: you always seem inspired when you write of her.

No. VIII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

Dumfries, 1st Dec. 1792.

YOUR alterations of my *Nanie O* are perfectly right. So are those of *My wife's a wanton wee thing*. Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear Sir, with the freedom which characterizes our correspondence, I must not, cannot alter *Bonie Leslie*. You are right, the word "Alexander" makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"For

" For Nature made her *what she is*,
And never made anither." (such a person as she is)

This is in my opinion more poetical than " Ne'er made sic anither." However it is immaterial: make it either way.* " Caledonie," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay: but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

The *Lea-rig* is as follows. *(Here the poet gives the two first stanzas as before*, p. 8, *with the following in addition.)*

The hunter lo'es the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo:
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It maks my heart sae cheery, O,
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

I am interrupted. Yours, &c.

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* Mr. Thomson has decided on *Ne'er made sic anither*.
E.

No. IX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

AULD ROB MORRIS.*

THERE's auld Rob Morris that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fellows and wale of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers, he has owsen and kine,
And ae bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

She's fresh as the morning, the fairest in May;
She's sweet as the ev'ning amang the new hay;
As blythe and as artless as the lambs on the lea,
And dear to my heart as the light to my e'e.

But Oh! she's an heiress, auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has naught but a cot-house and yard;
A wooer like me maunna hope to come speed,
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.

The

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* The two first lines are taken from an old ballad—the rest is wholly original. E.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me
nane ;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane :
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast.

O had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me !
O, how past descriving had then been my bliss,
As now my distraction no words can express !

. . . . . .

DUNCAN GRAY.

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't,
On blythe yule night when we were fu',
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh,
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh ;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan

Duncan fleech'd, and Duncan pray'd:
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,*
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his e'en baith bleert and blin',
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha! ha, &c.
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Shall I, like a fool, quoth he,
For a haughty hizzie die;
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, &c.

How it comes let Doctors tell,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal,
Ha, ha, &c.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her e'en, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan

* A well-known rock in the frith of Clyde. E.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty baith.
*Ha, ha, the wooing o't.**

. . . . . .

4th December, 1792.

THE foregoing I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them, or condemn them, as seemeth good in your sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air, which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.

No.

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* This has nothing in common with the old licentious ballad of Duncan Gray, but the first line, and part of the third—The rest is wholly original. E.

No. X.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

SONG.

Tune, "I HAD A HORSE."

O POORTITH cauld, and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet poortith a' I could forgive,
An' 'twere na' for my Jeanie.
O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love,
Depend on Fortune's shining?

This warld's wealth when I think on,
Its pride, and a' the lave o't;
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.
O why, &c.

Her

Her een sae bonnie blue betray,
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her o'erword ay,
She talks of rank and fashion.
O why, &c.

O wha can prudence think upon,
And sic a lassie by him?
O wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?
O why, &c.

How blest the humble cotter's fate!*
He wooes his simple dearie;
The sillie bogles wealth and state
Can never make them eerie.
O why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love,
Depend on Fortune's shining?

GALLA

---

* "The wild-wood Indian's fate" in the original MS.
E.

GALLA WATER.

THERE's braw braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather;
But Yarrow braes, nor Ettric shaws,
Can match the lads o' Galla water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Aboon them a' I loe him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonny lad o' Galla water.

Altho' his daddie was nae laird,
And tho' I hae nae meickle tocher;
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks by Galla water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure!

Jan. 1793.

Jan. 1793.

MANY returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication? will these two foregoing be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints, that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much-valued C. greet him, in my name, with the compliments of the season.

Yours, &c.

No. XI.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, Jan. 20, 1793.

YOU make me happy, my dear Sir, and thousands will be happy to see the charming songs you

you have sent me. Many merry returns of the season to you, and may you long continue, among the sons and daughters of Caledonia, to delight them, and to honour yourself.

The four last songs with which you favoured me, viz. *Auld Rob Morris*, *Duncan Gray*, *Galla Water*, and *Cauld Kail*, are admirable. Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to every body.

The distracted lover in *Auld Rob*, and the happy shepherdess in *Galla Water*, exhibit an excellent contrast: they speak from genuine feeling, and powerfully touch the heart.

The number of songs which I had originally in view, was limited; but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing, leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of *omnegatherum* are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings; the one characteristic of the plaintive, and the other of the lively songs; and I have Dr. Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our

songs have doubtless been called forth by particular events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes relating to them.

The late Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, I believe, knew more of this than any body, for he joined to the pursuits of an antiquary, a taste for poetry, besides being a man of the world, and possessing an enthusiasm for music beyond most of his contemporaries. He was quite pleased with this plan of mine, for I may say it has been solely managed by me, and we had several long conversations about it when it was in embryo. If I could simply mention the name of the heroine of each song, and the incident which occasioned the verses, it would be gratifying. Pray, will you send me any information of this sort, as well with regard to your own songs, as the old ones?

To all the favourite songs of the plaintive or pastoral kind, will be joined the delicate accompaniments, &c. of Pleyel. To those of the comic and humorous class, I think accompaniments scarcely necessary; they are chiefly fitted for the conviviality of the festive board, and a tuneful voice, with a proper delivery of the words, renders them perfect. Nevertheless, to these I propose adding bass accompaniments, because then they are fitted either for singing, or for instrumental performance

performance, when there happens to be no singer. I mean to employ our right trusty friend Mr. Clarke, to set the bass to these, which he assures me he will do *con amore*, and with much greater attention than he ever bestowed on any thing of the kind. But for this last class of airs I will not attempt to find more than one set of verses.

That eccentric bard, Peter Pindar, has started I know not how many difficulties, about writing for the airs I sent to him, because of the peculiarity of their measure, and the trammels they impose on his flying Pegasus. I subjoin for your perusal the only one I have yet got from him, being for the fine air "Lord Gregory." The Scots verses printed with that air, are taken from the middle of an old ballad, called *The Loss of Lochroyan*, which I do not admire. I have set down the air therefore as a creditor of yours. Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour; might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?

. . . . . .

POSTSCRIPT

From the Hon. A. ERSKINE.

Mr. Thomson has been so obliging as to give me a perusal of your songs. Highland

Mary is most enchantingly pathetic, and Duncan Gray possesses native genuine humour: "spak "o' lowpin o'er a linn," is a line of itself that should make you immortal. I sometimes hear of you from our mutual friend C. who is a most excellent fellow, and possesses, above all men I know, the charm of a most obliging disposition. You kindly promised me, about a year ago, a collection of your unpublished productions, religious and amorous; I know from experience how irksome it is to copy. If you will get any trusty person in Dumfries to write them over fair, I will give Peter Hill whatever money he asks for his trouble, and I certainly shall not betray your confidence.

I am your hearty admirer,

ANDREW ERSKINE.

No. XII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

26th Janury, 1793.

I APPROVE greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans. Dr. Beattie's essay will of itself be a treasure.

On

On my part, I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c. of our Scots songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast, that, in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise; *Lochaber*, and the *Braes of Ballenden*, excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scots muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs; but would it give no offence? In the mean time, do not you think that some of them, particularly *The sow's tail to Geordie*, as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *naïveté*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add to

every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work. His *Gregory* is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter: that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has I think more of the ballad simplicity in it.

. . . . . .

LORD GREGORY.

O MIRK, mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempest's roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tow'r,
Lord Gregory ope thy door.

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some *pity* on me shaw,
If *love* it may na be.

Lord

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove,
By bonnie Irwine side,
Where first I own'd that virgin-love
I lang, lang had denied?

How aften did'st thou pledge and vow
Thou wad for ay be mine!
And my fond heart, itsel sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast:
Thou dart of heav'n that flashest by,
O wilt thou give me rest!

Ye mustering thunders from above
Your willing victim see!
But spare, and pardon my fause love,
His wrangs to heaven and me!*

. . . . . .

My

* The Song of Dr. Walcott, on the same subject, is as follows:

Ah ope, Lord Gregory, thy door!
A midnight wanderer sighs;
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

Who

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS soon.

No.

Who comes with woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

Alas! thou heard'st a pilgrim mourn,
That once was priz'd by thee:
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gav'st to love and me.

But should'st thou not poor Marian know,
I'll turn my feet and part:
And think the storms that round me blow,
Far kinder than thy heart.

It is but doing justice to Dr. Walcott to mention, that his song is the original. Mr. Burns saw it, liked it, and immediately wrote the other on the same subject, which is derived from an old Scottish ballad of uncertain origin. E.

No. XIII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

20th March, 1793.

MARY MORISON.

Tune—"Bide ye yet."

O mary, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blythly wad I bide the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun;
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw.

Tho'

Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake would gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only fault is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt nae gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

.....

MY DEAR SIR,

THE song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stinted powers) to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c. of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you by and bye. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot bear rivalship from you, nor any body else.

No. XIV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

March, 1793.

WANDERING WILLIE.

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Now tired with wandering, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom my ae only dearie,
And tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Loud blew the cauld winter winds at our parting;
It was nae the blast brought the tear in my e'e:
Now welcome the simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Ye hurricanes rest in the cave o' your slumbers!
O how your wild horrors a lover alarms!
Awaken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But

But if he's forgotten his faithfulest Nanie,
O still flow between us, thou wide roaring main;
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But dying believe that my Willie's my ain!

. . . . . .

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to determine whether the above, or the old *Thro' the lang muir*, be the best.

No. XV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Open the door to me, Oh!

WITH ALTERATIONS.

Oh open the door, some pity to shew,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!*
Tho' thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, Oh!

Cauld

* This second line was originally,

If love it may na be! Oh! E.

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
  But caulder thy love for me, Oh!
The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
  Is nought to my pains frae thee, Oh!

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
  And time is setting with me, Oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
  I'll ne'er trouble them, nor thee, Oh!

She has open'd the door, she has open'd it wide;
  She sees his pale corse on the plain, Oh!
My true love she cried, and sank down by his side,
  Never to rise again, Oh!

I do not know whether this song be really mended.

No. XVI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

JESSIE.

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

True hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair;
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over;
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain,
Grace, beauty, and elegance, fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

O fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law;
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger!
Her modest demeanor's the jewel of a'.

No.

XVII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 2d April, 1793.

I WILL not recognize the title you give yourself, "the Prince of *indolent* correspondents;" but if the adjective were taken away, I think the title would then fit you exactly. It gives me pleasure to find you can furnish anecdotes with respect to most of the songs: these will be a literary curiosity.

I now send you my list of the songs, which I believe will be found nearly complete. I have put down the first lines of all the English songs which I propose giving in addition to the Scotch verses. If any others occur to you, better adapted to the character of the airs, pray mention them, when you favour me with your strictures upon every thing else relating to the work.

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of the songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added

added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of desert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies, and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments—they are indeed beyond all praise.

I am very much pleased with the several last productions of your muse: your Lord Gregory, in my estimation, is more interesting than Peter's, beautiful as his is! Your *Here awa Willie* must undergo some alterations to suit the air. Mr. Erskine and I have been conning it over; he will suggest what is necessary to make them a fit match.*

The

---

* WANDERING WILLIE,

As altered by Mr. Erskine and Mr. Thomson.

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my *ain* only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter

The gentleman I have mentioned, whose fine taste you are no stranger to, is so well pleased both with the musical and poetical part of our work, that he has volunteered his assistance, and has already written four songs for it, which by his own desire I send for your perusal.

Winter-winds blew loud and caul at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e,
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
As simmer to nature, *so* Willie to me.

Rest ye wild storms in the cave o' your slumbers,
How your dread *howling* a lover alarms!
Blow soft ye breezes! roll gently ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless and minds na his Nanie,
Flow still between us thou *dark-heaving* main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
While dying I think that my Willie's my ain.

Our poet, with his usual judgment, adopted some of these alterations, and rejected others. The last edition is as follows:

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie,
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame;
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie,
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie the same.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting,
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my e'e,
Welcome now simmer, and welcome my Willie,
The simmer to nature, my Willie to me.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the cave of your slumbers,
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken ye breezes, row gently ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.

But oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nanie,
Flow still between us thou wide-roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain.

Several of the alterations seem to be of little importance in themselves, and were adopted, it may be presumed, for the sake of suiting the words better to the music. The Homeric epithet for the sea, *dark-heaving*, suggested by Mr. Erskine, is in itself more beautiful, as well perhaps as more sublime than *wide-roaring*, which he has retained; but as it is only applicable to a placid state of the sea, or at most to the swell left on its surface after the storm is over, it gives a picture of that element not so well adapted to the ideas of eternal separation, which the fair mourner is supposed to imprecate. From the original song of *Here awa Willie*, Burns has borrowed nothing but the second line and part of the first. The superior excellence of this beautiful poem will, it is hoped, justify the different editions of it which we have given. E.

No. XVIII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

When wild war's deadly blast was blawn.

Air—"THE MILL MILL O."

WHEN wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning:*

I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger,
My humble knapsack a' my wealth,
A poor and honest sodger.

A leal, light heart was in my breast,
My hand unstain'd wi' plunder:
And for fair Scotia, hame again,
I cheery on did wander.

 I thought

* Variation, lines 3d and 4th:
And eyes again with pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd with mourning.

See No. XXIV.

thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy,
I thought upon the witching smile
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonny glen,
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill, and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy aft I courted:
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling!
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my een was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain would be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang,
Take pity on a sodger.

Sae wistfully she gaz'd on me,
And lovelier was than ever;
Quo' she, a sodger ance I lo'ed,
Forget him shall I never:

Our

Our humble cot, and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake it,
That gallant badge, the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gaz'd—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale like ony lily;
She sank within my arms and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie?
By him who made yon sun and sky—
By whom true love's regarded,
I am the man; and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded.

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted!
Tho' poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
Quo' she, my grandsire left me gowd,
A mailen plenish'd fairly;
And come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly!

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honor;

The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger,
Remember he's his country's stay
In day and hour of danger.

. . . . . .

MEG O' THE MILL.

Air—"O BONNIE LASS WILL YOU LIE IN A BARBACK."

O ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a claute o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley Miller.

The Miller was strappin, the Miller was ruddy;
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady:
The laird was a widdiefu', bleerit knurl;
She's left the guid-fellow and ta'en the churl.

The Miller he hecht her, a heart leal and loving:
The Laird did address her wi' matter mair moving,
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear chained bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonnie side-saddle.

O wae

O wae on the siller, it is sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that is fixed on a mailen!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle,
But, gie me my love, and a fig for the warl!

No. XIX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

7th April, 1793.

Thank you, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c. ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse, as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race. (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning post!) and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing, "Sae merry as we a' hae been!" and raising my last looks to the whole human race,

race, the last words of the voice of *Coila** shall be, "Good night and joy be wi' you a'!" So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks as they have occurred at random on looking over your list.

The first lines of *The last time I came o'er the moor*, and several other lines in it, are beautiful; but in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay! the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to *make*, or *mend*. *For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove*, is a charming song! but *Logan burn and Logan braes*, are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery: I'll try that likewise, and if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of *Logan Water* (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty.

"Now my dear lad maun face his foes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

My Patie is a lover gay, is unequal. "His mind

---

* Burns here calls himself the *Voice of Coila*, in imitation of Ossian, who denominates himself the *Voice of Cona*. *Sae merry as we a' hae been*; and *Good night and joy be wi' you a'*, are the names of two Scottish tunes. E.

"mind is never muddy," is a muddy expression indeed.

"Then I'll resign and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony."—

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book. My song, *Rigs of Barley*, to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it, and thresh a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. *The Lass o' Patie's mill* is one of Ramsay's best songs: but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend Mr. Erskine, will take into his critical consideration. In Sir J. Sinclair's Statistical volumes, are two claims, one, I think, from Aberdeenshire, and the other from Ayrshire, for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it of the late John Earl of Loudon, I can, on such authorities, believe.

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon-castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding, or walking out together, his Lordship and Allan passed a sweet romantic spot on Irwine water, still called, "Patie's Mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bareheaded on the green." My Lord observed to Allan, that

it

it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

One day I heard Mary say, is a fine song; but for consistency's sake, alter the name "Adonis." Were there ever such banns published, as a purpose of marriage between *Adonis* and *Mary?* I agree with you that my song, *There's nought but care on every hand*, is much superior to *Poortith cauld*. The original song, *The Mill mill O*, though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissable; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow, as an English set. *The Banks of the Dee*, is, you know, literally *Langolee*, to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it; for instance,

"And sweetly the nightingale sung from the
"*tree*."

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen, or heard, on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza, equal to *The small birds rejoice*, &c. I do myself honestly avow that I think

think it a superior song.* *John Anderson my jo*—the song to this tune in Johnson's Museum, is my composition, and I think it not my worst: if it suit you, take it and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are *Tullochgorum*, *Lumps o' pudding*, *Tibbie Fowler*, and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called *Craigieburn Wood;* and in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of our sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it: and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. *Shepherds I have lost my love!* is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago,

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* It will be found, in the course of this correspondence, that the Bard produced a second stanza of *The Chevalier's Lament*, (to which he here alludes) worthy of the first.

E.

ago, which I think * * * * * * * * * * * * but in its original state is not quite a lady's song, I inclose an altered, not amended copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.*

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his *Lone Vale* is divine.

Your's, &c.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

---

* Mr. Thomson, it appears, did not approve of this song, even in its altered state. It does not appear in the correspondence; but it is probably one to be found in his MSS beginning,

"Yestreen I got a pint of wine,
A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast of mine,
The gowden locks of Anna."

It is highly characteristic of our Bard, but the strain of sentiment does not correspond with the air to which he proposes it should be allied. E.

No. XX.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

Edinburgh, April, 1793.

I REJOICE to find, my dear Sir, that ballad-making continues to be your hobby-horse. Great pity 'twould be, were it otherwise. I hope you will amble it away for many a year, and "witch the world with your horsemanship."

I know there are a good many *lively* songs of merit that I have not put down in the list sent you; but I have them all in my eye. *My Patie is a lover gay*, though a little unequal, is a natural and very pleasing song, and I humbly think we ought not to displace or alter it, except the last stanza.*

No.

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* The original letter from Mr. Thomson contains many observations on the Scottish songs, and on the manner of adapting the words to the music, which, at his desire, are suppressed. The subsequent letter of Mr. Burns refers to several of these observations. E.

No. XXI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

April, 1793.

I HAVE yours, my dear Sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost.

The business of many of our tunes wanting at the beginning what fidlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

"There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather,"

You may alter to

"Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
Ye wander, &c."

My song, *Here awa, there awa*, as amended by Mr. Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you.*

Give

* The reader has already seen that Burns did not finally adopt all of Mr. Erskine's alterations. E.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is in my opinion reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either, in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity: now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces; still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. W. proposes doing with *The last time I came o'er the moor.* Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house; by heaven 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W.'s version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song, as the Highlander mended his gun; he gave it a new stock, a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not by this object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in *The lass o' Patie's mill* must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we can take

take the same liberty with *Corn rigs are bonnie.* Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. *Cauld kail in Aberdeen* you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, *Poortith cauld and restless love.* At any rate my other song, *Green grow the rashes* will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name, which of course would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song, on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit *Bonnie Dundee.* I send you also a ballad to the *Mill mill O.**

The last time I came o'er the moor, I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS Scots airs by me which I have pickt up,

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* The song to the tune of *Bonnie Dundee,* is that in No. XVI. The ballad to the *Mill mill O* is that beginning,

"When wild war's deadly blasts are blawn." E.

up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned *lugs** would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air called *Jackie Hume's Lament*? I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll inclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum.† I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from *viva voce*.‡

Adieu!

---

* Ears. E.

† The song here mentioned is that given in No. XVIII. *O ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?* This song is surely Mr. Burns's own writing, though he does not generally praise his own songs so much.

Note by Mr. Thomson.

‡ The air here mentioned is that for which he wrote the ballad of *Bonnie Jean*, to be found p. 79. E.

No. XXII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

April, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAD scarcely put my last letter into the post-office, when I took up the subject of *The last time I came o'er the moor*; and, ere I slept, drew the outlines of the foregoing.* How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered, when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert any thing of mine. One hint let me give you—whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one *iota* of the original Scottish airs; I mean in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

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* The song alluded to here will be found in a subsequent part of this Volume. E.

No. XXIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 26th April, 1793.

I HEARTILY thank you, my dear Sir, for your last two letters, and the songs which accompanied them. I am always both instructed and entertained by your observations; and the frankness with which you speak out your mind, is to me highly agreeable. It is very possible I may not have the true idea of simplicity in composition. I confess there are several songs, of Allan Ramsay's, for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but, at present, suffice it to say, that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the ground-work of beauty in all the arts. I will gladly appropriate your most interesting new

ballad, *When wild war's deadly blast, &c.* to the *Mill mill O*, as well as the two other songs to their respective airs; but the third and fourth lines of the first verse must undergo some little alteration in order to suit the music. Pleyel does not alter a single note of the songs. That would be absurd indeed! With the airs which he introduces into the sonatas, I allow him to take such liberties as he pleases; but that has nothing to do with the songs.

. . . . . .

P. S. I wish you would do as you proposed with your *Rigs of Barley*. If the loose sentiments are *threshed* out of it, I will find an air for it; but as to this there is no hurry.

No. XXIV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

June, 1793.

When I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unhinge me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling; but the total ruin of a much-loved friend, is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the *Mill mill O.** What you think a defect, I esteem as a positive beauty: so you see how doctors differ.

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* The lines were the third and fourth. See p. 50.

"Wi' mony a sweet babe fatherless,
And mony a widow mourning."

As our poet had maintained a long silence, and the first number

differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Frazer, the hautboy-player in Edinburgh—he is here, instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one, well known as a reel by the name of *The Quaker's Wife;* and which I remember a grand aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of *Liggeram Cosh, my bonnie wee lass.* Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it, that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin; and inclose Fraser's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy, they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

Tune

---

number of Mr. Thomson's *Musical Work* was in the press, this gentleman ventured, by Mr. Erskine's advice, to substitute for them in that publication,

> "And eyes again with pleasure beam'd
> That had been blear'd with mourning."

Though better suited to the music, these lines are inferior to the original. This is the only alteration adopted by Mr. Thomson, which Burns did not approve, or at least assent to.

Tune—"LIGGERAM COSH."

BLYTHE hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me;
Careless ilka thought and free,
As the breeze flew o'er me:
Now nae longer sport and play,
Mirth or sang can please me;
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy, is the task,
Hopeless love declaring:
Trembling, I dow nocht but glow'r,
Sighing, dumb, despairing!
If she winna ease the thraws
In my bosom swelling;
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon maun be my dwelling.

I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

No.

No. XXV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

25th June, 1793.

Have you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of *Logan Water*; and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done any thing at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three-quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow-chair, ought to have some merit.

Tune

Tune—"LOGAN WATER."

O LOGAN, sweetly didst thou glide,
That day I was my Willie's bride;
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now thy flow'ry banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark and drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

Again the merry month o' May
Has made our hills and vallies gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers:
Blythe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy:
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush;
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile:
But I wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

O wae

O wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?*
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie hame to Logan braes!

....

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment, in Witherspoon's collection of Scots songs?

Air—"HUGHIE GRAHAM."

"O gin my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

Oh,

---

* Originally,
"Ye mind na, 'mid your cruel joys,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cries." E.

Oh, there beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fley'd awa by Phebus' light."

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes, on the hind-legs of my elbow-chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but if worthy of insertion at all they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows any thing of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

O were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I, a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing:

How I wad mourn, when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

No. XXVI.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

Monday, 1st July, 1793.

I am extremely sorry, my good Sir, that any thing should happen to unhinge you. The times are terribly out of tune; and when harmony will be restored, Heaven knows.

The first book of songs, just published, will be dispatched to you along with this. Let me be favoured with your opinion of it frankly and freely.

I shall certainly give a place to the song you have written for the *Quaker's Wife;* it is quite enchanting. Pray will you return the list of songs, with such airs added to it as you think ought to be included. The business now rests entirely on myself, the gentlemen who originally

nally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be off. No matter, a loser I cannot be. The superior excellence of the work will create a general demand for it as soon as it is properly known. And were the sale even slower than it promises to be, I should be somewhat compensated for my labour, by the pleasure I shall receive from the music. I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to inclose a small mark of my gratitude,* and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven, if you do, our correspondence is at an end: and though this would be no loss to you, it would mar the publication, which under your auspices cannot fail to be respectable and interesting.

.....

Wednesday

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* *L. 5.*

Wednesday morning.

I THANK you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to Logan water: Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable; but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it.

No. XXVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

July 2d, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just finished the following ballad, and, as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns's *wood-note wild*, is very fond of it, and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

. . . . . .

There was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen,
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonnie Jean.

And

And ay she wrought her mammie's wark,
And ay she sang sae merrilie:
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danc'd wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

As in the bosom o' the stream
The moon-beam dwells at dewy e'en;
So trembling, pure, was tender love
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.*

And

---

* In the original MS our Poet asks Mr. Thomson if this stanza is not original? E.

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And ay she sighs wi' care and pain;
Yet wist na what her ail might be,
Or what wad mak her weel again.

But did na Jeanie's heart loup light,
And did na joy blink in her e'e,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love
Ae e'enin on the lily lea?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
And whisper'd thus his tale o' love:

O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me!
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

At barn or byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me.

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa.

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M. daughter to Mr. M. of D., one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager.

No. XXVIII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON,

July, 1793.

I assure you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that Honour which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's Integrity —on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and

and independence of mind, will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants, which the cold, unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written; only your partiality to me has made you say too much: however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

The Flowers of the Forest is charming as a poem, and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas, beginning,

"I hae seen the smiling o' fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn; I forget of what place; but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

"O fickle fortune, why this cruel sporting,
"Why, why torment us—*poor sons of a day!*"

The old ballad, *I wish I were where Helen lies*, is silly to contemptibility.* My alteration of it in Johnson's is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, ancient ballads (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough forgeries) has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations, but no matter.

In my next I will suggest to your consideration a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the mean time, allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have *committed* your character and fame; which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the SONS and DAUGHTERS of TASTE—all whom poesy can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretel and affirm, that your great-grand-

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* There is a copy of this ballad given in the account of the Parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleeming (which contains the tomb of fair Helen Irvine) in the Statistics of Sir John Sinclair, vol. XIII. p. 275, to which this character is certainly not applicable. E.

grand-child will hold up your volumes, and say with honest pride, "This so much admired se-"lection was the work of my ancestor."

No. XXIX.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 1st August, 1793.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

The bonnie brucket Lassie, certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. *Cauld kail in Aberdeen—Let me in this ae night*, and several of the livelier airs, wait the muse's leisure: these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts: besides, you'll notice that in airs of this sort,

sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet, than in the slower airs of *The Bush aboon Traquair*, *Lord Gregory*, and the like; for in the manner the latter were frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound, without the sense. Indeed both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, languid, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us a yawning?

Your ballad, *There was a lass and she was fair*, is simple and beautiful, and shall undoubtedly grace my collection.

No. XXX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR THOMSON,

I HOLD the pen for our friend Clarke, who at present is studying the music of the spheres at

at my elbow. The *Georgium Sidus* he thinks is rather out of tune; so until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the Rondeau subjects, and if more are wanted, he says you shall have them.

. . . . . .

Confound your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

No. XXXI.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

YOUR objection, my dear Sir, to the passages in my song of *Logan Water*, is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it: if I can I will. The other passage you object to, does not appear in the same light to me.

I have

I have tried my hand on *Robin Adair*, and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

. . . . . .

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

Tune—"ROBIN ADAIR."

WHILE larks with little wing,
Fann'd the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare:
Gay the sun's golden eye,
Peep'd o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song,
Glad did I share;
While yon wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
Phillis the fair.

Down

Down in a shady walk,
  Doves cooing were,
I mark'd the cruel hawk
  Caught in a snare:
So kind may fortune be,
Such make his destiny!
He who would injure thee,
  Phillis the fair.

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for *Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.* If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine; if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly on the business.* 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself.

No.

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* The song herewith sent, is that in p. 29 of this volume. E.

No. XXXII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY GOOD SIR,

I CONSIDER it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine, that it has procured me so many of your much valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to St. Stephen for the tunes: tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my stair case, conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d' esprit*; which I perused more than once, without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics: though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet of two to one, you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study how to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give *Robin Adair* a

Scottish dress. Peter is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out-of-the-way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with. I wish you would invoke the muse for a single elegant stanza to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of *Down the Burn Davie*, so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr. Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your *John Anderson my Jo*, which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs. Anderson in great good humour is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles and looks at her with such glee, as to shew that he *fully* recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were *first acquent*. The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers.

No. XXXIII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT crinkum-crankum tune, *Robin Adair*, has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend C.'s story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice as follows.

. . . . . .

SONG.

HAD I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar:
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

Falsest

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare,
All thy fond-plighted vows—fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try,
What peace is there!

. . . . . .

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing Gaelic songs to both *Robin Adair* and *Gramachree*. They certainly have more of the Scotch than Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness: so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them;—except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favorite airs might be common to both. A case in point—They have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called *Caun du delish*. The fact is, in a publication of Corri's, a great while ago, you will

will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song *set* to it. Its name there, I think, is *Oran-Gaoil*, and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the Rev. Gaelic Parson, about these matters.

No. XXXIV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

LET me in this ae night, I will reconsider. I am glad that you are pleased with my song, *Had I a cave*, &c. as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the Museum in my hand, when, turning up *Allan Water*, "What numbers shall the muse "repeat," &c. as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air; and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's

say's tea-table, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is *Allan Water*, or *My love Annie's very bonnie.* This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a *chusing line*, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy.

. . . . . .

By Allan-stream I chanc'd to rove,
While Phœbus sank beyond Benleddi;*
The winds were whispering thro' the grove,
The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
And thought on youthfu' pleasures mony;
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang—
O dearly do I love thee Annie!†

O happy be the woodbine bower,
Nae nightly bogle make it eerie;
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
The place and time I met my dearie!

Her

* A mountain west of Strath-Allan, 3009 feet high. R. B.

† Or, 'O my love Annie's very bonnie.' R. B.

Her head upon my throbbing breast,
She, sinking said, " I'm thine for ever!"
While mony a kiss the seal imprest,
The sacred vow, we ne'er should sever.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose brae,
The simmer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheery, thro' her shortening day,
Is autumn in her weeds o' yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or thro' each nerve the rapture dart,
Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

Bravo! say I: it is a good song. Should you think so too (not else) you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than all the year else.

God bless you!

No. XXXV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

Is *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad*, one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's Museum.

. . . . . .

O WHISTLE and I'll come to you, my lad,*
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad:
Tho'

* In some of the MSS the four first lines run thus,
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo,
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo;
Tho' father and mother and a' should say no,
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo. E.

See also page 237.

Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent, when you come to court me,
And come nae unless the back-yett be a-jee;
Syne up the back-stile and let nae body see,
And come as ye were na comin to me.
And come, &c.
O whistle, &c.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd not a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'e,
Yet look as ye were na lookin at me.
Yet look, &c.
O whistle, &c.

Ay vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whyles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court nae anither, tho' jokin ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me,
For fear, &c.
O whistle, &c.

. . . . . .

Another favorite air of mine is *The muckin o' Geordie's byre;* when sung slow with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry: that I have endeavoured to supply, as follows:

Adown

Adown winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

CHORUS.

Awa wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare:
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

The daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild;
Thou emblem, said I, o' my Phillis!
For she is simplicity's child.
Awa, &c.

The rose-bud's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest:
How fair and how pure is the lily,
But fairer and purer her breast.
Awa, &c.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie:
Her breath is the breath o' the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.
Awa, &c.

Her voice is the song of the morning
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.
Awa, &c.

But beauty how frail and how fleeting,
The bloom of a fine summer's day!
While worth in the mind o' my Phillis
Will flourish without a decay.*
Awa, &c.

. . . . . .

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss P. M. sister to *Bonnie Jean*. They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me the very first grist I get from my rhyming mill.

No.

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* This song, certainly beautiful, would appear to more advantage without the chorus; as is indeed the case with several other songs of our author. E.

No. XXXVI.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT tune, *Cauld Kail*, is such a favorite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloamin-shot at the muses;* when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding "without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits: secondly, the last stanza of

* Gloamin—twilight, probably from glooming. A beautiful poetical word which ought to be adopted in England. A gloamin-shot, a twilight-interview. E.

of this song I send you, is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's Museum.

. . . . . .

Air—"CAULD KAIL."

COME let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The warld's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own,
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone
That I may live to love her.

Thus in my arms, wi' all thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never!

. . . . . .

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favorite air I shall be highly pleased. *The last*

last time I came o'er the Moor, I cannot meddle with, as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of chorusses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

No. XXXVII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

DAINTY DAVIE.

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

CHORUS.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,
Then thro' the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.
Meet me, &c.

When day expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' nature's rest,
I flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my ain dear Davie.

CHORUS.

Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Bonnie Davie, dainty Davie,
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
*My ain dear dainty Davie.**

So

* *Dainty Davie* is the title of an old Scotch song, from which Burns has taken nothing but the title and the measure. E.

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N. B. In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is**** nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

No. XXXVIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 1st. Sept. 1793.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad*, will render it nearly as great a favourite as *Duncan Gray*. *Come let me take thee to my breast—Adown wind-*

ing Nith, and *By Allan stream*, &c. are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended. *Had I a cave on some wild distant shore*, is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you. The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken; these songs of yours will descend with the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to inclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her, no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm, that they must be familiar to him who writes for them.

No. XXXIX.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then; though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burthen of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air *Hey tuttie taitie* may rank among

among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of Liberty and Independence, which I threw into a kind of SCOTTISH ode, fitted to the air that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.*

. . . . . .

Bruce to his Troops on the eve of the Battle of
BANNOCKBURN.

TO ITS AIN TUNE.

SCOTS, wha hae wi' WALLACE bled,
Scots, wham BRUCE has often led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's

* This noble strain was conceived by our poet during a storm among the wilds of Glen-Ken in Galloway. A more finished copy will be found afterwards. E.

Now's the day and now's the hour:
See the front o' battle lour:
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor-knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for SCOTLAND's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
FREE-MAN stand, or FREE-MAN fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
LIBERTY's in every blow!
LET US DO, or DIE!

. . . . . .

So may God ever defend the cause of Truth and Liberty, as he did that day!—Amen.

P. S.

P. S. I shewed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

No. XL.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I dare say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse; which though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight,

wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells; that it is sure to run poor pilgarlic, the bedlam-jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

The following song I have composed for *Orangaoil*, the Highland air, that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well!—if not, 'tis also well!

. . . . . .

Tune—"ORAN-GAOIL."

BEHOLD the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart!
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail:
"E'en here, I took the last farewell:
"There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail,"

Along

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll west-ward turn my wistful eye:
Happy thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be!
While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
O tell me, does she muse on me!

No. XLI.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 5th Sept. 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakespeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is to me the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language.

I happened

I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as *Hey tuttie taitie*. Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it, for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs, I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs, of which I lately sent you the list; and I think *Lewie Gordon* is most happily adapted to your ode: at least with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in *Lewie Gordon* more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of *Lewie Gordon*, which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterize your verses. Now the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse, the only line too short for the air, is as follows:

Verse 1*st*, Or to *glorious* victorie.

2*d*, *Chains*—chains and slaverie.

Verse 3*d*, Let him, *let him* turn and flie.
4*th*, Let him *bravely* follow me.
5*th*, But *they shall*, they shall be free.
6*th*, Let us, *let us* do, or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment, or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is, "Welcome to your gory bed." Would not another word be preferable to *welcome?* In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.

The beauty of the verses you have made for *Oran-gaoil* will insure celebrity to the air.

No. XLII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I HAVE received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.*

Down the burn Davie. I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus:

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was ay the tale.

 With

* Mr. Thomson's list of songs for his publication. In his remarks the bard proceeds in order, and goes through the whole; but on many of them he merely signifies his approbation. All his remarks of any importance are presented to the reader. E.

With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And ay shall follow you."*

Thro' the wood laddie—I am decidedly of opinion, that both in this, and *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

Cowden-knowes. Remember in your index that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning,

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

Laddie lie near me, must *lie by me* for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing, (such as it

---

* This alteration Mr. Thomson has adopted, (or at least intended to adopt) instead of the last stanza of the original song, which is objectionable in point of delicacy.
E.

it is) I can never compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fire-side of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism!

Gill Morice, I am for leaving out. It is a plaguy length; the air itself is never sung; and its place can well be supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, *Craigieburn Wood* and *Roy's wife*. The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the hand-writing of the lady who composed

posed it; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.*

Highland-laddie. The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best; and the new an Italianized one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls the old *Highland-laddie*, which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called *Ginglan Johnnie;* it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum, *I hae been at Crookieden*, &c. I would advise you in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction; and in the mean time, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

Auld Sir Simon, I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place *The Quaker's wife.*

Blythe hae I been o'er the hill, is one of the finest songs ever I made in my life; and besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose

* This song, so much admired by our bard, will be found in a future part of the volume, p. 207. E.

I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include *The bonniest lass in a' the warld* in your collection.

Dainty Davie, I have heard sung, nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit, as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

Fee him Father—I inclose you Fraser's set of this tune when he plays it slow; in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas, in that style; merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which *Patie Allan's mither died, that was about the back o' midnight;* and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the hautbois and the muse.

.....

Thou

. . . . . .

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie, Thou hast left me ever.
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie, Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death, Only should us sever,
Now thou'st left thy lass for ay—I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.*

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie, Thou hast me forsaken,
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie, Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou canst love anither jo, While my heart is breaking:
Soon my weary een I'll close—Never mair to waken, Jamie,
Ne'er mair to waken.†

. . . . . .

Jockie

---

* The Scottish (the Editor uses the word substantively, as the English) employ the abbreviation *I'll* for *I shall* as well as *I will*; and it is for *I shall* it is used here. In Annandale, as in the northern counties of England, for *I shall* they use *I'se*. E.

† This is the whole of the song. The bard never proceeded farther. *Note by Mr. Thomson.*

. . . . . .

Jockie and Jenny I would discard, and in its place would put *There's nae luck about the house*, which has a very pleasant air, and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other language. *When she came ben she bobbet*, as an air, is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way, would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

Saw ye my Father, is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song; in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fidlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—*Saw* ye my father, &c.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.*

. . . . . .

Todlin

---

* This song appears afterwards, It begins, "Where are the joys I hae met in the morning." E.

Todlin hame. Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine; that this air is highly susceptible of pathos: accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert, try it to a song of mine in the Museum; *Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon.* One song more and I have done: *Auld lang syne.* The air is but *mediocre;* but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

. . . . . .

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

CHORUS.

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

We

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin sun till dine:
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid willie-waught,
For auld lang sine.
For auld, &c.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.*
For auld, &c.

. . . . . .

Now,

---

* This song, of the olden time, is excellent. It is worthy of our bard. E.

. . . . . .

Now, I suppose I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. *Gill Morice*, *Tranent Muir*, *M'Pherson's Farewell*, *Battle of Sheriff-muir*, or *We ran and they ran*, (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history) *Hardiknute*, *Barbara Allan*, (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared) and besides do you know that I really have the old tune to which *The Cherry and the Slae* was sung; and which is mentioned as a well known air in Scotland's Complaint, a book published before poor Mary's days. It was then called *The banks o' Helicon;* an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's history of Scottish music. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit: but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

No. XLIII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

I AM happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's "bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows

BANNOCK-BURN.

Robert Bruce's Address to his Army.

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to glorious victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward! chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Traitor! coward! turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa',
Caledonian! on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains;
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be— shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe;
Liberty's in every blow!
Forward! let us do, or die!

. . . . . .

N. B. I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace.

"A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort! I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen!

No. XLIV.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

12*th Sept.* 1793.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you

you make; and to reconsider the whole with attention.

Dainty Davie must be sung, two stanzas together, and then the chorus: 'tis the proper way. I agree with you, that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of *Fee him Father*, when performed with feeling: but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for *Fee him Father*, which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr. James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with *Fee him Father*, and with *Todlin hame* also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs.—Some Bacchanals I would wish to discard. *Fy let's a' to the bridal*, for instance, is so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken colliers; and *Saw ye my Father* appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think with great deference to the poet, that

that a prudent general would avoid saying any thing to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. Gory presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shewn the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest,

"Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious victorie."

No. XLV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would,

in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconsidering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "soger! hero!" I will have it "Ca-"ledonian! on wi' me!"

I have scrutinized it over and over; and to the world some way or other it shall go as it is. At the same time it will not in the least hurt me, should you leave it out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.*

I have

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* Mr. Thomson has very properly adopted this song (if it may be so called) as the bard presented it to him. He has attached it to the air of *Lewie Gordon*, and perhaps among the existing airs he could not find a better; but the poetry is suited to a much higher strain of music, and may employ the genius of some Scottish Handel, if any such should in future arise. The reader will have observed, that Burns adopted the alterations proposed by his friend and correspondent in former instances, with great readiness; perhaps indeed, on all indifferent occasions. In the present instance, however, he rejected them, though repeatedly urged, with determined resolution. With every respect for the judgment of Mr. Thomson and his friends, we may be satisfied that he did so. He who in preparing for an engagement attempts to withdraw his imagination from images

I have finished my song to *Saw ye my father?* and in English, as you will see. That there is a syllable too much for the *expression* of the air, is

---

images of death, will probably have but imperfect success, and is not fitted to stand in the ranks of battle, where the liberties of a kingdom are at issue. Of such men the conquerors at Bannock-burn were not composed. Bruce's troops were inured to war, and familiar with all its sufferings and dangers. On the eve of that memorable day, their spirits were without doubt wound up to a pitch of enthusiasm suited to the occasion: a pitch of enthusiasm at which danger becomes attractive, and the most terrific forms of death are no longer terrible. Such a strain of sentiment, this heroic "welcome" may be supposed well calculated to elevate—to raise their hearts high above fear, and to nerve their arms to the utmost pitch of mortal exertion. These observations might be illustrated and supported, by a reference to the martial poetry of all nations, from the spirit-stirring strains of Tyrtæus, to the war-song of General Wolfe. Mr. Thomson's observation, that "Welcome to your gory bed, is a discouraging address," seems not sufficiently considered. Perhaps, indeed, it may be admitted, that the term *gory* is somewhat objectionable, not on account of its presenting a frightful, but a disagreeable image to the mind. But a great poet uttering his conceptions on an interesting occasion, seeks always to present a picture that is vivid, and is uniformly disposed to sacrifice the delicacies of taste

is true; but, allow me to say, that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver, is not a great matter: however, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular: my advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are—

FAIR

---

on the altar of the imagination. And it is the privilege of superior genius, by producing a new association, to elevate expressions that were originally low, and thus to triumph over the deficiencies of language. In how many instances might this be exemplified from the works of our immortal Shakespeare.

"Who would *fardels* bear,
To groan and *sweat* under a weary life;—
When he himself might his *quietus* make
With a *bare bodkin*?"

It were easy to enlarge, but to suggest such reflections is probably sufficient. E.

FAIR JENNY.

See p. 121.

Tune—"SAW YE MY FATHER?"

WHERE are the joys I have met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
At evening the wild woods among?

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair:
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad sighing care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our vallies,
And grim surly winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known,
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

Adieu, my dear Sir! The post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure.

No. XLVI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON,

September, 1793.

I have been turning over some volumes of songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs.

For *Muirland Willie*, you have, in Ramsay's Tea-table, an excellent song, beginning "Ah

why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" As for *The Collier's dochter*, take the following old Bacchanal.

. . . . . .

DELUDED swain, the pleasure
The fickle Fair can give thee,
Is but a fairy treasure,
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion,
They are but types of woman.

O! art thou not ashamed,
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou would'st be named,
Despise the silly creature.

Go find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow,
And then to bed in glory.

The

The faulty line in Logan-water, I mend thus;

" How can your flinty hearts enjoy,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"

The song otherwise will pass. As to *M'Gregoira Rua-Ruth*, you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours in the Museum. vol. ii. p. 181. The song begins,

" Raving winds around her blowing,*"

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the *Banks of Banna*, for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of *Roy's Wife*, for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. *Deil tak the wars*, is a charming song; so is, *Saw ye my Peggy? There's nae luck about the house*, well deserves a place. I cannot

* This will be found in the latter part of this volume. E.

not say that, *O'er the hills and far awa*, strikes me, as equal to your selection. *This is no my ain house*, is a great favourite air of mine; and if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of *I hae laid a herrin in sawt?* I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty; and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert *Fie let us a' to the bridal*, to any other words than its own.

What pleases me, as simple and *naïve*, disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, *Fie gie me my coggie, Sirs, Fie let us a' to the bridal*, with several others of that cast, are to me highly pleasing; while, *Saw ye my father, or saw ye my mother?* delights me with its descriptive simple pathos. Thus my song, *Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?* pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but, "Ilka man wears his belt his ain gait."

No. XLVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

October, 1793.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor Erskine![*] The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has till now scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the *Quaker's Wife*; though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of *Leiger m' chass*. The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air:

Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

To

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[*] The honourable A. Erskine, brother to Lord Kelly, whose melancholy death Mr. Thomson had communicated in an excellent letter, which he has suppressed. E.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish:
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away these rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

. . . . . .

Your objection to the English song I proposed for *John Anderson my jo*, is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favour. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit.

SONG.

SONG.

By Gavin Turnbull.

O condescend, dear charming maid,
My wretched state to view;
A tender swain to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

While here, all melancholy,
My passion I deplore,
Yet, urg'd by stern resistless fate,
I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain,
The urchin's power denied;
I laughed at every lover's pain,
And mock'd them when they sigh'd.

But how my state is alter'd!
Those happy days are o'er;
For all thy unrelenting hate,
I love thee more and more.

O yield, illustrious beauty, yield,
No longer let me mourn;
And tho' victorious in the field,
Thy captive do not scorn.

Let

Let generous pity warm thee,
My wonted peace restore;
And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
And love thee more and more.

. . . . . .

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale, will suit as an English song to the air, *There was a lass and she was fair.* By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favour; but I like some of his pieces very much.

. . . . . .

THE NIGHTINGALE.

By G. Turnbull.

Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove,
That ever tried the plaintive strain,
Awake thy tender tale of love,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For tho' the muses deign to aid,
And teach him smoothly to complain;
Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

All

All day, with fashion's gaudy sons,
In sport she wanders o'er the plain:
Their tales approves, and still she shuns
The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
And bring the solemn hours again,
Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

. . . . . .

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's, which would go charmingly to *Lewie Gordon*.

LAURA.

By G. Turnbull.

Let me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill;
Where the sweetest May-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among:
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

If

If at rosy dawn I chuse,
To indulge the smiling muse;
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noon-tide heat;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Thro' unfrequented wilds I stray;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise;
While with boundless joy I rove
Thro' the fairy land of love:
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

. . . . . .

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.

No. XLVIII.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

7th Nov. 1793.

MY GOOD SIR,

After so long a silence, it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognise your well-known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to *Leiger m' choss*, which I think extremely good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr. Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer, as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided.

No.

No. XLIX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

December, 1793.

Tell me how you like the following verses to the tune of *Jo Janet*:

Husband, husband, cease your strife,
  Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
  Yet I am not your slave, sir.

"One of two must still obey,
  Nancy, Nancy,
Is it man or woman, say,
  My spouse, Nancy?"

If 'tis still the lordly word,
  Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
  And so good b'ye allegiance!

" Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy,
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse, Nancy."

My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think how you will bear it.

" I will hope and trust in heaven,
Nancy, Nancy;
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse, Nancy."

Well, sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you.

" I'll wed another, like my dear
Nancy, Nancy;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse, Nancy."

Air

Air—"THE SUTOR'S DOCHTER."

WILT thou be my dearie?
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee?
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

No. L.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 17th April, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

OWING to the distress of our friend for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity, till lately, of perusing it.* How sorry I am to find Burns saying, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" while *he* is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—Go, says the doctor, and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humour. Alas, Sir, replied the patient, I am that unhappy Carlini!

Your

* A letter to Mr. Cunningham to be found in vol. ii.
E.

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly, and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your Bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserable weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your Cotter's Saturday Night, and if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind, he is perhaps unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his colouring is *sombre*, otherwise his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the *Sutor's dochter*, and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume; your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song, to suit *Jo Janet*, is inimitable. What think you of the air, *Within a mile of Edinburgh?* It has always struck me as a modern English imitation, but it is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked that I believe I must include it. The verses are little better than *namby pamby*. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

No. LI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

May, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

I RETURN you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younker knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the *Burin*, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the Gentle Shepherd; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

 I am

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, *I shall be quite in song*, as you shall see by and bye. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron of Heron, which she calls *The Banks of Cree.* Cree is a beautiful romantic stream: and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it.

. . . . . .

BANKS OF CREE.

HERE is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village-bell has told the hour,
O what can stay my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call;
'Tis but the balmy-breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark in the grove,
His little faithful mate to cheer,
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

And

And art thou come! and art thou true!
O welcome dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

No. LII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

July, 1794.

Is there no news yet of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until the allies set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of democratic discords? Alas the day! And woe is me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of millions.*—* * * * * *

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honoured friend

* A portion of this letter has been left out, for reasons that will be easily imagined. E.

friend of mine, Mr. Graham, of Fintray. I wrote on the blank side of the title-page, the following address to the young lady.

. . . . . .

HERE, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift; tho' humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian-feeling* in thy breast,
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love ecstatic wake his seraph song.

Or pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born piety her sanction seals.

No.

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* It were to have been wished that instead of *ruffian-feeling*, the bard had used a less rugged epithet, e. g. *ruder*. E.

No. LIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 10th August, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

I OWE you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. I fear it will be as you say, I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry; and as the season approaches in which your muse of Coila visits you, I trust I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews!

No. LIV.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

30th August, 1794.

THE last evening, as I was straying out, and thinking of, *O'er the hills and far away*, I spun the following stanza for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store, like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it at first; but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs, but as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of his love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception—*Sweet Annie frae the sea-beach came.* Now for the song.

ON

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

Tune—"O'ER THE HILLS," &c.

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad?
How can I the thought forego,
He's on the seas to meet the foe?
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
Are with him that's far away.

CHORUS.

On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
Are ay with him that's far away.

When in summer's noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply at this scorching sun
My sailor's thund'ring at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!

Fate

Fate do with me what you may,
Spare but him that's far away!
On the seas, &c.

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power;
As the storms the forest tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray,
For his weal that's far away.
On the seas, &c.

Peace thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet:
Then may heaven with prosperous gales,
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey
My dear lad that's far away.
On the seas, &c.

. . . . . .

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of christian meekness.

No. LV.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 16th Sept. 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

You have anticipated my opinion of, *On the seas and far away;* I do not think it one of your very happy productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptation.

The second is the least to my liking, particucularly "Bullets, spare my only joy." Confound the bullets! It might perhaps be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the chorusses.

No.

No. LVI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

I shall withdraw my, *On the seas and far away*, altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world and try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, *abortions* and all; and, as such, pray look over them, and forgive them, and burn them.* I am flattered at your adopting, *Ca' the*

* This Virgilian order of the poet, should, I think, be disobeyed with respect to the song in question, the second stanza excepted. *Note by Mr. Thomson.*

Doctors differ. The objection to the second stanza does not strike the Editor. E.

the yowes to the knowes, as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

. . . . . .

CHORUS.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather growes,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.

Hark, the mavis' evening sang
Sounding Clouden's woods amang;*
Then a faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the, &c.

We'll

* The river Clouden, or Cluden, a tributary stream to the Nith. E.

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Thro' the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.
Ca' the, &c.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheery.
Ca' the, &c.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the, &c.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stown my very heart;
I can die—but canna part,
My bonnie dearie.
Ca' the, &c.

. . . . . .

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs my first scribbling fit.

No. LVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song, called *Onagh's water-fall?* The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of her's shall have merit; still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the Scots Musical Museum, and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song, to the air above mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

SHE

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME BEST OF A'.

Tune—"ONAGH'S WATER-FALL."

SAE flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eye-brows of a darker hue,
Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing een o' bonnie blue.
Her smiling sae wyling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow:
Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
When first her bonnie face I saw,
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Like harmony her motion;
Her pretty ancle is a spy
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad make a saint forget the sky.
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her fau'tless form and gracefu' air;
Ilk feature—auld nature
Declar'd that she could o nae mair:

Her's are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
And ay my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Let others love the city,
And gaudy shew at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon
Fair beaming, and streaming,
Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

. . . . . .

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decried, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased,

pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be shewing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for *Rothemurche's Rant*, an air which puts me in raptures; and in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. *Rothemurche*, he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and on his recommendation I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.*

I have begun anew, *Let me in this ae night.* Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have

---

* In the original follow here two stanzas of a song, beginning "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks;" which will be found at full length afterwards, p. 192. E.

have the *denouëment* to be successful or otherwise? should she "let him in" or not?

Did you not once propose *The Sow's tail to Geordie*, as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's christian name, and yours I am afraid is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram, which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following.

. . . . . .

To Dr. Maxwell, on Miss Jessy Staig's Recovery.

MAXWELL, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessy from the grave!
An angel could not die.

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!

No.

No. LVIII.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

I perceive the sprightly muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet, whose *wood-notes wild* are become as enchanting as ever. *She says she lo'es me best of a'*, is one of the pleasantest table songs I have seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having the *Sow's tail*, particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. Geordie, as you observe, is a name

name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs. Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain Jeanie therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your *Ca' the ewes* is a precious little morceau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you, whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendor. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas: few or none of those which have appeared since the *Duenna*, possess much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs of course would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer—Storace for Drury-lane, or Shield for Covent-garden: both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the

namby

namby pamby tribe of flowery scribblers; but were you to address Mr. Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.*

No. LIX.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 14th Oct. 1794.

The last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections, I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind, and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added, are inclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs

* Our bard had before received the same advice, and certainly took it so far into consideration, as to have cast about for a subject. E.

songs I expected from him, which are in general elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr. Ritson, an Englishman? I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shews clearly that Mr. Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs according to the æras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq. he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication, on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it; uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred, that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a-packing to make room for Peter's! Of you he speaks with some respect, but gives you a passing hit or two, for daring to dress up a little, some old foolish songs for the Museum. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and best authorities: many of them, however, have such a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognize the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections

tions of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed; and as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste and discernment to choose the best they could hear, (which is far from certain) still it must evidently be a chance, whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved: and without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other.

No. LX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

19*th October*, 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

By this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, persuade you to adopt my favourite, *Craigie-burn wood*, in your selection: it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made, is one of the finest women in Scotland; and in fact *(entre nous)* is in a manner to me what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, or friend, or what

what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaiver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober, gin-horse routine of existence, could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book? No! no!—Whenever I want to be more than ordinary *in song*; to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs; do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business; if you like my idea of, *When she cam ben she bobbit*, the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas.

SAW

SAW YE MY PHELY.

(Quasi dicat Phillis.)

Tune—"WHEN SHE CAM BEN SHE BOBBIT."

O SAW ye my dear, my Phely?
O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
She's down i' the grove, wi' a new love,
She winna come hame to her Willy.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee her Willy.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

. . . . . .

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. *The Posie*, (in the Museum) is my composition; the air

air was taken down from Mrs. Burns's voice.* It is well known in the West Country, but the old words are trash. By the bye, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which *Roslin Castle* is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. *Strathallan's Lament* is mine; the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved Allan Masterton. *Donocht-Head* is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edinburgh Herald; and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it.† *Whistle o'er the lave o't* is mine: the

---

* *The Posie* will be found afterwards. This, and the other poems of which he speaks, had appeared in Johnson's Museum, and Mr. T. had inquired whether they were our bard's. E.

† The reader will be curious to see this poem, so highly praised by Burns. Here it is.

KEEN blaws the wind o'er Donocht-Head,*(a)*
The snaw drives snelly thro' the dale,
The Gaber-lunzie tirls my sneck,
And shivering tells his waefu' tale.

" Cauld

. . . . . .

(a) A mountain in the North. E.

the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player, in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by all

---

" Cauld is the night, O let me in,
" And dinna let your minstrel fa',
" And dinna let his winding sheet
" Be naething but a wreath o' snaw.

" Full ninety winters hae I seen,
" And pip'd where gor-cocks whirring flew,
" And mony a day I've danc'd, I ween,
" To lilts which from my drone I blew."
My Eppie wak'd, and soon she cry'd,
' Get up guidman, and let him in;
' For weel ye ken the winter night
' Was short when he began his din.'

My Eppie's voice, O wow it's sweet,
Even tho' she bans and scaulds a wee;
But when it's tun'd to sorrow's tale,
O, haith, its doubly dear to me!
Come in, auld carl, I'll steer my fire,
I'll make it bleeze a bonnie flame;
Your bluid is thin, ye've tint the gate,
Ye should nae stray sae far frae hame.

all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

Andrew and his cutty gun. The song to which this is set in the Museum is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

How long and dreary is the night! I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

Tune

"Nae hame have I," the minstrel said,
"Sad party-strife o'erturned my ha';
"And, weeping at the eve of life,
"I wander thro' a wreath o' snaw."

* * * * * * *

This affecting poem is apparently incomplete. The author need not be ashamed to own himself. It is worthy of Burns, or of Macneill. E.

Tune—"CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN."

How long and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie!
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Tho' I were ne'er sae weary.

CHORUS.

For oh, her lanely nights are lang;
And oh, her dreams are eerie;
And oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar,
How can I be but eerie?
For oh, &c.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours;
The joyless day how dreary:
It was na sae, ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
For oh, &c.

Tell

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world, as naked as Mr. What-d'ye-call-um has done in his London collection.*

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at *Duncan Gray*, to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:

. . . . . .

Tune—"DUNCAN GRAY."

LET not woman e'er complain
Of inconstancy in love;
Let not woman e'er complain
Fickle man is apt to rove:

* Mr. Ritson. E.

Look abroad through Nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
Man should then a monster prove?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow:
Sun and moon but set to rise,
Round and round the seasons go:

Why then ask of silly man,
To oppose great Nature's plan?
We'll be constant while we can—
You can be no more, you know.

. . . . . .

Since the above I have been out in the country taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page in this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual I got *into song;* and returning home I composed the following:

The

The Lover's Morning Salute to his Mistress.

Tune—"DEIL TAK THE WARS."

SLEEP'ST thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature;
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which Nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy:
Now thro the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods,
Wild Nature's tenants, freely, gladly stray;
The lintwhite in his bower
Chants o'er the breathing flower;
The lav'rock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.*

Phœbus

---

* *Variation.* Now to the streaming fountain,
Or up the heathy mountain,
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours;
The lav'rock, &c. E.

Phœbus gilding the brow o' morning,
Banishes ilk darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When absent frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With starless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,
When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then I wake to life, to light and joy.*

. . . . . .

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I inclose

---

* *Variation.* When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
The night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky.
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty's light;
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then, 'tis then I wake to life and joy. E.

I inclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend putting it into the Musical Museum. Here follow the verses I intend for it.

. . . . . .

THE AULD MAN.

But lately seen in gladsome green
The woods rejoice the day,
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or bield,
Sinks in time's wintry rage.

Oh,

Oh, age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why com'st thou not again!

. . . . . .

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please: whether this miserable drawling hotchpotch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

No. LXI.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 27th October, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she, whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard! that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. *Craigie-burn-wood* must certainly be adopted into my family, since *she* is the object of the song; but in the name of decency I must beg a new chorus verse from you. *O to be lying beyond thee dearie,* is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs. The idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must

must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from Maggie Lauder. She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P. S. Pray what do your anecdotes say concerning *Maggie Lauder*? was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely *spier for her if you ca'd at Anstruther town.*

No. LXII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

November, 1794.

Many thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present: it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c. for your work. I intend drawing it up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c. it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work.* In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected

* It does not appear whether Burns completed these anecdotes, &c. Something of the kind (probably the rude draughts) was found amongst his papers, and appears in vol. ii. E.

selected for *My Lodging is on the cold ground.* On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris, (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration) she suggested an idea, which I, in my return from the visit, wrought into the following song.

. . . . . .

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings:
For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lighted ha':
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe, in the birken shaw.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

The shepherd, in the flowery glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo:
The courtier tells a finer tale,
But is his heart as true?

These wild wood-flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast o' thine:
The courtier's gems may witness love—
But 'tis na love like mine.

. . . . . .

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of *Ma chere Amie.* I assure you I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last.—Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers

powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase! * * * * * * * * * * * *

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and, with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, I have cut down for an English dress to your, "*Daintie Davie*," as follows:

SONG.

SONG,

Altered from an old English one.

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flow'rs were fresh and gay,
One morning, by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;

From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flow'ry mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

CHORUS.

Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people, you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,
In notes of sweetest melody
They hail, the charming Chloe;

Till, painting gay the eastern skies.
The glorious sun began to rise,
Out-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she, &c.

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to *Rothemurche's Rant;* and you have Clarke to consult, as to the set of the air for singing.

. . . . . .

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

Tune—"ROTHEMURCHE'S RANT."

CHORUS.

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my dearie O?

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee;
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie O?
Lassie, wi', &c.

And when the welcome simmer-shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine bower
At sultry noon, my dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

When

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way;
Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie O.
Lassie wi', &c.

And when the howling wintry blast,
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest;
Enclasped to my faithfu' breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie O.*

Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie!
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,
Wilt thou be my dearie O?

. . . . . .

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon,

* In some of the MSS this stanza runs thus:

And should the howling wintry blast
Disturb my lassie's midnight rest,
I'll fauld thee to my faithfu' breast,
And comfort thee, my dearie O. E.

noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well: if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as, *Deil tak the wars*, to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of *Saw ye my father:* by heavens! the odds is gold to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is, originally and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius Tom D'Urfey; so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan, in the *Duenna*, to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins,

"When sable night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune as follows:*

Now.

---

* See the song in its first and best dress in page 181. Our bard remarks upon it, "I could easily throw this into "an English mould; but to my taste, in the simple and the "tender of the pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scot-"tish has an inimitable effect." E.

Now for my English song to *Nancy's to the Greenwood, &c.*

. . . . . .

FAREWELL thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling!
O mem'ry! spare the cruel throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And yet in secret languish,
To feel a fire in ev'ry vein,
Nor dare disclose my anguish.

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
I fain my griefs would cover:
The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan,
Betray the hapless lover.
I know thou doom'st me to despair,
Nor wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But oh! Eliza, hear one prayer,
For pity's sake forgive me!

The music of thy voice I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
Till fears no more had sav'd me:
Th' unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors sinks at last
In overwhelming ruin.

There is an air, *The Caledonian Hunt's delight*, to which I wrote a song that you will find in Johnson. *Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;* this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend Clarke; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr. Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm; and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is that, in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the *Black Keys;* but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of, several years ago. Now to shew you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a Countess informed me, that the first person who introduced the air into this country, was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an

itinerant

itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult then to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting *Craigie-burn-wood;* and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new *Craigie-burn-wood* altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow to make the request; 'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment, when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

No.

No. LXIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

15th November, 1794.

MY GOOD SIR,

SINCE receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr. Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the *Caledonian Hunt* is more Bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice, and the second part in many instances cannot be sung, at concert pitch, but by a female voice. A song thus performed makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent me, is admirable, and will be an universal favourite.

Your

Your verses for *Rothemurche* are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for *Deil tak the wars*, so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for *My lodging is on the cold ground*, is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted by it. Some of your Chlorises I suppose have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour; else we differ about it; for I should scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, on reading that she had lint-white locks!

Farewell thou stream that winding flows, I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after *Nancy:* at least it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish and melancholy English verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character, the better. Those you have manufactured for *Dainty Davie*, will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes: I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs: the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

No. LXIV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

19*th November*, 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the *tedium* of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old.

'*Tune*

Tune—"THE SOW'S TAIL."

HE.

O Philly, happy be that day
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, ay I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou didst pledge the powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky,
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight o' Philly.

SHE.

The littlé swallow's wanton wing,
Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weet
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound up in ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

SHE.

What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I care na wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willy.

. . . . . .

Tell me honestly how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has to my ear, a vulgarity about it, which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. RITSON, ranks with me, as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity: whereas, simplicity is as much *eloignée* from vulgarity, on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air, *Craigie-burnwood*,

wood, that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect; and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not however a case in point with *Rothemurche;* there, as in *Roy's wife of Aldivaloch*, a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with *Roy's wife*, as well as *Rothemurche*. In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting note, in both tunes, has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

Try, { O Roy's wife of Aldivaloch.
{ O lassie wi' the lint-white locks.

and

Compare with, { *Roy's* wife of Aldivaloch.
{ *Lassie* wi' the lint-white locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true furor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti*.

The Caledonian Hunt is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, *Todlin hame*, is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and *Andrew and his cutty gun*, is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown? It has given me many a heart-ache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish; I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much —*Lumps o' Pudding*.

. . . . . .

Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creepin alang,
Wi' a cog o' gude swats, and an auld Scottish sang.

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought;
But man is a soger, and life is a faught:
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my Freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A night o' gude fellowship sowthers it a':

When

When at the blythe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her
way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jade gae:
Come ease, or come travail; come pleasure, or pain;
My warst word is—"Welcome and welcome
again!"

If you do not relish this air, I will send it to Johnson.

. . . . . .

Since yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to *Roy's Wife*. You will allow me that in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?

Tune—"ROY'S WIFE."

CHORUS.

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou know'st my aching heart,
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Is

Is this thy plighted, fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?
Canst thou, &c.

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy.
*Canst thou, &c.**

Well!

---

* To this address in the character of a forsaken lover, a reply was found on the part of the lady, among the MSS of our bard, evidently in a female hand-writing; which is doubtless that referred to in p. 118 of this volume. The temptation to give it to the public is irresistible; and if, in so doing, offence should be given to the fair authoress, the beauty of her verses must plead our excuse.

Tune—"ROY'S WIFE."

CHORUS.

Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay my Willie—yet believe me,
For, ah! thou know'st na' every pang
Wad wring my bosom should'st thou leave me.

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish Blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell

Tell me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven,
And when this heart proves fause to thee,
Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.
Stay my Willie, &c.

But to think I was betrayed,
That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder!
To take the flow'ret to my breast,
And find the guilefu' serpent under.
Stay my Willie, &c.

Could I hope thou'dst ne'er deceive,
Celestial pleasures might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.
Stay my Willie, &c.

It may amuse the reader to be told, that on this occasion the gentleman and the lady have exchanged the dialects of their respective countries. The Scottish bard makes his address in pure English: the reply on the part of the lady, in the Scottish dialect, is, if we mistake not, by a young and beautiful Englishwoman. E.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another, to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and lastly, an oaten reed exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have, when the corn-stems are green and full-grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back-ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If

Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine; as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in Poets is nae sin;" and I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.

No. LXV.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

28th November, 1794.

I acknowledge, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my impudence, in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have all along condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy, that it ceas e

ceases to be wonderful, if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the duet is a *chef d'œuvre*. *Lumps o' pudding* shall certainly make one of my family dishes; you have cooked it so capitally, that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast when you find yourself in good spirits; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind, of which we have great choice. Besides, one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to every body. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown: it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, *The Soldier's Return*, to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me, when she first recognizes her ain dear Willie, "She gaz'd, she redden'd like a rose." The three lines immediately following are no doubt more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting

in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him in considering him worthy of standing in a niche by the side of Burns, in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of any thing but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says he remembers to have heard one in his younger days, made of wood instead of your bone, and that the sound was abominable.

Do not, I beseech you, return any books.

No.

No. LXVI.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

December, 1794.

It is, I assure you; the pride of my heart, to do any thing to forward, or add to the value of your book; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song, in the Museum, to *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love-song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:

MY NANIE'S AWA.

Tune—"There'll never be peace," &c.

Now in her green mantle blythe nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat o'er the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nanie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw,
They mind me o' Nanie—and Nanie's awa.

Thou lav'rock that springs frae the dews of the lawn
The shepherd to warn o' the grey-breaking dawn,
And thou mellow mavis that hails the night fa',
Give over for pity—my Nanie's awa.

Come autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay:
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—now Nanie's awa.

. . . . . .

How does this please you? As to the point of time, for the expression, in your proposed print from my *Soger's Return:* it must certainly be at—"She gaz'd." The interesting dubiety and suspence, taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me, as things of which a master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth, yours.

No.

No. LXVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

January, 1795.

I FEAR for my songs; however a few may please, yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we, poetic folks, have been describing the spring, for instance; and as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c. of these said rhyming folks.

A great critic, Aikin on songs, says, that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts, inverted into rhyme.

FOR

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.

Is there, for honest poverty
  That hangs his head, and a' that;
The coward-slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
  Our toils obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
  The man's the gowd for a' that.

What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a coof for a' that:
For a' that, and a' that,
  His ribband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
  He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Gude faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

. . . . . .

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle;* for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for *Craigie-burn-wood?*

SWEET fa's the eve on Craigie-burn,
And blythe awakes the morrow,
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing.

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet dare na for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,
When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wither.*

Farewell! God bless you.

No.

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* Craigie-burn-wood is situated on the banks of the river Moffat, and about three miles distant from the village of that name, celebrated for its medicinal waters. The woods of Craigie-burn and of Dumcrief, were at one time favourite haunts of our poet. It was there he met the "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," and that he conceived several of his beautiful lyrics. E.

No. LXVIII.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 30th Jan. 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

I THANK you heartily for *Nanie's awa*, as well as for *Craigie-burn*, which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts, in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, *For a' that*, shall undoubtedly be included in my list.

No. LXIX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

February, 1795.

Here is another trial at your favourite air.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

O lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou wakin, I would wit,
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.

CHORUS.

O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo.

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet;
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

The

The bitter blast that round me blaws
Unheeded howls, unheededfa's;
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

. . . . . .

HER ANSWER.

O tell na me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain!
Gae back the gait ye cam again,
I winna let you in, jo.

CHORUS.

I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
And ance for a' this ae night,
I winna let you in, jo.

The snellest blast, at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nocht to what poor she endures
That's trusted faithless man, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed:
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her ain, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
Is now the cruel fowler's prey;
Let witless, trusting, woman say
How aft her fate's the same, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

I do not know whether it will do.

No. LXX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Ecclefechan, 7th Feb. 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON,

You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as Supervisor, (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked, little village. I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress; I have tried to "gae back the gait I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget

forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them: like a prudent man, (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed) I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk, at your service!*

I wrote to you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it, *We'll gang nae more to yon town?* I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night.

No.

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* The bard must have been tipsy indeed, to abuse sweet Ecclefechan at this rate. E.

No. LXXI.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

25th February, 1795.

I have to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles, one containing *Let me in this ae night;* and the other from Ecclefechan, proving, that drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song as it now stands very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for *O wat ye wha's in yon town.*

No. LXXII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

May, 1795.

ADDRESS TO THE WOOD-LARK.

Tune—"Where'll bonnie Ann lie.

Or, "Loch-eroch Side."

O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray!
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha' kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

Thou

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

Let me know, your very first leisure, how you like this song.

. . . . . .

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

Tune—"AY WAKIN O."

CHORUS.

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight,
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Can I cease to care?
Can I cease to languish,
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?
Long, &c.

Every hope is fled,
  Every fear is terror;
Slumber even I dread,
  Every dream is horror.
    Long, &c.

Hear me, pow'rs divine!
  Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
  But my Chloris spare me!
    Long, &c.

. . . . . .

How do you like the foregoing? The Irish air, *Humours of Glen*, is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the *Poor Soldier*, there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows:

SONG.

Tune—"HUMOURS OF GLEN."

THEIR groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon,
  Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume,
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
  Wi' the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.

Far

Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen:
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay sunny vallies,
And cauld, CALEDONIA's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
What are they? The haunt o' the tyrant and slave!
The slave's spicy forests, and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean.

.....

SONG.

Tune—"LADDIE LIE NEAR ME."

'TWAS na her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin;
Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing:
'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness.

Sair

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me;
But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love the dearest!
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter,
Sooner the sun in his motion would falter.

Let me hear from you.

No. LXXIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

YOU must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift, when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of the Cotter's Saturday night is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The

The figure intended for your portrait, I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember your phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs. Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic *Address to the Wood-lark*, your elegant *Panegyric on Caledonia*, and your affecting verses on *Chloris's illness*. Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song to "Laddie lie near me," though not equal to these, is very pleasing.

No. LXXIV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Altered from an old English song.

Tune—"John Anderson my jo."

How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,
And to the wealthy booby,
Poor woman sacrifice.
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife;
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies,
To shun impelling ruin
A while her pinions tries;
Till of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet.

SONG.

SONG.

Tune—"DEIL TAK THE WARS."

MARK yonder pomp of costly fashion,
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compar'd with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.
What are the showy treasures?
What are the noisy pleasures?
The gay, gaudy glare of vanity and art:
The polish'd jewel's blaze,
May draw the wond'ring gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright,
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris,
In simplicity's array;
Lovely as yonder sweet op'ning flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day.
O then, the heart alarming,
And all resistless charming, [soul!
In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Av'rice would deny
His worshipp'd deity,
And feel thro' ev'ry vein Love's raptures roll.

Well!

Well! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders: your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit for poetizing, provided that the strait jacket of criticism don't cure me. If you can in a post or two administer a little of the intoxicating portion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's phrenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

No. LXXV.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

May, 1795.

Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present: though I am ashamed of the value of it, being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shewn it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in class-

ing it as a first-rate production. My phiz is *sae kenspeckle*, that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once.—My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an *ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-gairie, urchin* of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicol, after a certain friend of mine, who is one of the masters of a grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless.

Give the inclosed epigram to my much-valued friend Cunningham, and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me, in a manner introduced me—I mean a well-known military and literary character, Colonel Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last songs. Are they condemned?

No.

No. LXXVI.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

'13*th May*, 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr. Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so *very* early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again, by speaking of obligation.

I like

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetizing. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of *William and Margaret*, and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect.

No. LXXVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

In *Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad*, the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father and mother, and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with

with lightning, a Fair One, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment; and dispute her commands if you dare!

. . . . . .

SONG.

Tune—"THIS IS NO MY AIN HOUSE."

CHORUS.

O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place:
It wants to me the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And ay it charms my very saul,
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

A thief

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen,
But gleg as light are lovers' een,
When kind love is in the e'e.
O this is no, &c.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.
O this is no, &c.

. . . . . .

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The inclosed sheet contains two songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend Cunningham.

I inclose the sheet open, both for your inspection, and that you may copy the song, *O bonnie was yon rosy brier*. I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me, and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses, to the air of *I wish my love was in a mire;* and poor Erskine's English lines may follow.

I inclose

I inclose you, a *For a' that, and a' that*, which was never in print; it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady.

. . . . . .

To Mr. CUNNINGHAM.

SCOTTISH SONG.

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers:
The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;
While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe!

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art:
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

The

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the with'ring blast
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blythe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "hope nae mair,"
What tongue his woes can tell!
Within whase bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

SCOTTISH SONG.

O BONNIE was yon rosy brier,
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man;
And bonnie she, and ah, how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew,
How pure amang the leaves sae green!
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

. . . . . .

Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of my poems, presented to the lady, whom, in so many fictitious reveries of passion, but

but with the most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I have so often sung under the name of Chloris.

'Tis friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lour;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower)

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store,
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part;
And, dearest gift of heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refin'd of sense and taste,
With every muse to rove:
And doubly were the poet blest
These joys could he improve.

. . . . . .

Une bagatelle de l'amitié.

COILA.

No. LXXVIII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 3d. Aug. 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

THIS will be delivered to you by a Dr. Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptation.

My

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! It is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter, *O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,* to the prosaic line, *Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad.* I must be permitted to say, that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would in my name petition the charming Jeany, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.*

I should be happy to see Mr. Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses. Every body regrets his writing so very little, as every body acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray was the resolution formed coolly before dinner,

---

* The Editor, who has heard the heroine of this song sing it herself in the very spirit of arch simplicity that it requires, thinks Mr. Thomson's petition unreasonable. If we mistake not, this is the same lady who produced the lines to the tune of *Roy's wife*, p. 224. E.

dinner, or was it a midnight vow made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr. Cunningham what you have sent him.

P. S. The lady's, *For a' that and a' that*, is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours than I to Hercules.

No. LXXIX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

ENGLISH SONG.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

Forlorn, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O wert thou, love, but near me,
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in those arms of thine, love.
O wert, &c.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.
O wert, &c.

But dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.
O wert, &c.

.....

How

How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour: so much for the *speed* of my Pegasus, but what say you to his *bottom?*

No. LXXX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

SCOTTISH BALLAD.

Tune—"The Lothian Lassie."

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men,
The deuce gae wi' m, to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi' m, to believe me.

He spak o' the darts in my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was dying;
I said he might die when he liked, for Jean,
The Lord forgie me for lying, for lying,
The Lord forgie me for lying!

A weel-

A weel-stocked mailen, himsel for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffers:
I never loot on that I kenn'd it, or car'd,
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers,
But thought I might hae waur offers.

But what wad ye think? in a fortnight or less,
The deil tak his taste to gae near her!
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess,*
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her,
could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jad! I could bear her.

But

---

* In the original MS this line runs, "He up the *Gateslack* to my black cousin Bess," Mr. Thomson objected to this word, as well as to the word *Dalgarnock* in the next verse. Mr. Burns replies as follows:

"Gateslack is the name of a particular place, a kind of passage up among the Lawther hills, on the confines of this county. Dalgarnock is also the name of a romantic spot near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and a burial-ground. However, let the first line run, *He up the lang loan*," &c.

It is always a pity to throw out any thing that gives locality to our poet's verses. E.

But a' the niest week as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock,
And wha but my fine fickle lover was there,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock, a warlock,
I glowr'd as I'd seen a warlock.

But owre my left shouther I gae him a blink,
Least neebors might say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spier'd for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin,
And how her new shoon fit her auld shackl't feet,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin, a swearin,
But, heavens! how he fell a swearin.

He begged, for Gudesake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow:
So e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

. . . . . .

FRAGMENT.

FRAGMENT.

Tune—"THE CALEDONIAN HUNT'S DELIGHT."

Why, why tell thy lover,
Bliss he never must enjoy;
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie.

O why, while fancy, raptur'd, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou cruel
Wake thy lover from his dream!

. . . . . .

Such is the peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the tooth-ach, so have not a word to spare.

No. LXXXI.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

3d June, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR,

YOUR English verses to *Let me in this ae night*, are tender and beautiful; and your ballad to the "Lothian lassie," is a master-piece for its humour and naïveté. The fragment for the *Caledonian Hunt* is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and, as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had Bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet; but, nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord make us thankful!

No.

No. LXXXII.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

5th Feb. 1796.

O Robby Burns are ye sleeping yet?
Or are ye wauking, I would wit?

THE pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late, but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish "married to immortal verse." We have several true born Irishmen on the Scottish list; but they are now naturalized, and reckoned our own good subjects. Indeed we have none better. I believe I before told you that I have been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan; what is your opinion of this?

No.

No. LXXXIII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

February, 1796.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. B——, and for my remaining vol. of P. Pindar.—Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much.

HEY

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

Tune—"BALINAMONA ORA."

AWA wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms:
O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.

CHORUS.

Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher, then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher; the nice yellow guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knowes,
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie white yowes.
Then hey, &c.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
The langer ye hae them—the mair they're carest.
Then hey, &c.

If

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs, I dislike one thing; the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady: but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad.—Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose.—What you once mentioned of "flaxen locks" is just: they cannot enter into an *elegant* description of beauty. Of this also again—God bless you!*

No. LXXXIV.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

YOUR *Hey for a lass wi' a tocher*, is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of soft desire, into an amateur of acres and guineas.—

I am

---

* Our Poet never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris.

Note by Mr. Thomson.

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates, and I am to have my choice of them for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the Gentle Shepherd, because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind.

The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

No. LXXXV.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

April, 1796.

ALAS, my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams I have sat and wept," almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say, with poor Fergusson—

"Say wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my *howff*, and where

where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan's etchings. *Woo'd and married and a'*, is admirable! The *grouping* is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire, *Turnim-spike*. What I like least is, *Jenny said to Jocky*. Besides the female being in her appearance * * * * * if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathize with him! Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a * * * * * subject!

No. LXXXVI.

MR. THOMSON *to* MR. BURNS.

4th May, 1796.

I NEED not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathize in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour of your constitution I trust will soon set you on your feet again; and then it is to be hoped you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence, and returning good spirits, I remain with sincere regard yours.

P. S. Mrs. Hyslop I doubt not delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

No. LXXXVII.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—*Here's a health to them that's awa, hiney*, but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it.

. . . . . .

CHORUS.

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy!

Altho'

Altho' thou maun never be mine,
Altho' even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I mourn thro' the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thy arms—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love rolling e'e;
But why urge the tender confession
'Gainst fortune's fell cruel decree—Jessy!
Here's a health, &c.*

No.

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* In the letter to Mr. Thomson, the three first stanzas only are given, and Mr. Thomson supposed our poet had never gone farther. Among his MSS was, however, found the fourth stanza, which completes this exquisite song, the last finished offspring of his muse. E.

No. LXXXVIII.

MR. BURNS *to* MR. THOMSON.

THIS will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose to write me by him; and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the originals, or copies.* I had rather be the author of five well-written songs, than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout: a sad business!

Do

* It is needless to say, that this revisal Burns did not live to perform. E.

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

No. LXXXIX.

Mr. BURNS *to* Mr. THOMSON.

Brow, on the Solway-frith, 12th July, 1796.

After all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel * * * * * of a haberdasher to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted.

I do

I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen. I tried my hand on *Rothemurche* this morning. The measure is so difficult, that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

. . . . . .

SONG.

Tune—"ROTHEMURCHE."

CHORUS.

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou were wont to do?

Full well thou knowest I love thee dear,
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear!
O did not love exclaim, "Forbear,
Nor use a faithful lover so."
Fairest maid, &c.

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And by thy beauteous self I swear,
No love but thine my heart shall know.
Fairest maid, &c.*

No.

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* These verses, and the letter inclosing them, are written in a character that marks the very feeble state of Burns's bodily strength. Mr. Syme is of opinion that he could not have been in any danger of a jail at Dumfries, where certainly he had many firm friends, nor under any such necessity of imploring aid from Edinburgh. But about this time his reason began to be at times unsettled, and the horrors of a jail perpetually haunted his imagination. He died on the 21st of this month.

No. XC.

Mr. THOMSON *to* Mr. BURNS.

14*th July*, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR,

Ever since I received your melancholy letter by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily therefore for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure inclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble

trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of Editor. In the mean time it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour: remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive. Yours faithfully.

The verses to *Rothemurche* will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

In the beginning of the year 1787, another work had commenced at Edinburgh, entitled, *The Scots Musical Museum*, conducted by Mr. James Johnson; the object of which was to unite the songs and the music of Scotland in one general collection. The first volume of this work appeared in May, 1787, when our poet was in Edinburgh; and in it appeared one of his printed songs, to the tune of, *Green grow the rashes*, beginning "There's nought but care on every hand." He appears also to have furnished from his MSS the last song in that volume, which was an early production, and not thought by himself worthy of a place in his works. The second volume appeared in the spring of 1788, and contained several original songs of Burns; who also contributed liberally to the third, fourth, and fifth volumes, the last of which did not appear till after his death. In his communications to Mr. Johnson, to which his name was not in general affixed, our Bard was less careful than in his compositions for the greater work of Mr. Thomson. Several of them he never intended to acknowledge, and others, printed in the Museum, were found somewhat altered afterwards among his manuscripts. In the selection which follows, attention has been paid to the wishes of the author as far as they are known. The printed songs have been compared with the MSS, and the last corrections have been uniformly inserted. The reader will probably think many of the songs which follow, among the finest productions of his muse.

THE

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go, will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go to the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlet plays,
Come let us spend the lightsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

While o'er their heads the hazels hing,
The little birdies blythely sing,
Or lightly flit on wanton wing
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'er-hung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linns the burnie pours,
And rising weets wi' misty showers
The Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely blest wi' love and thee,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.*

STAY,

---

* This is written in the same measure as the *Birks of Abergeldie*, an old Scottish song, from which nothing is borrowed but the chorus.

STAY, MY CHARMER, CAN YOU LEAVE ME?

Tune—"AN GILLE DUBH CIAR DHUBH."

STAY, my charmer, can you leave me?
Cruel, cruel to deceive me!
Well you know how much you grieve me;
Cruel charmer, can you go!
Cruel charmer, can you go!

By my love so ill requited;
By the faith you fondly plighted;
By the pangs of lovers slighted;
Do not, do not leave me so!
Do not, do not leave me so!

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.

THICKEST night o'erhang my dwelling!
Howling tempests o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Still surround my lonely cave!

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engaged,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly waged,
But the Heavens deny'd success.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend,
The wide world is all before us—
But a world without a friend!*

THE

---

* Strathallan, it is presumed, was one of the followers of the young Chevalier, and is supposed to be lying concealed in some cave of the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. This song was written before the year 1788. E.

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.

Tune—"MORAG."

LOUD blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaws the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young Highland rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May Heaven be his warden:
Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon!

The trees now naked groaning,
Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
The birdies dowie moaning,
Shall a' be blythely singing,
And every flower be springing.

Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty warden
My youth's return'd to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon!*

RAVING

---

* The young Highland rover is supposed to be the young Chevalier, Prince Charles Edward. E.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

Tune,

"M'Grigor of Rero's Lament."

Raving winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strowing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella stray'd deploring.
"Farewell, hours that late did measure
"Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
"Hail, thou gloomy night of sorrow,
"Cheerless night that knows no morrow.

"O'er the past too fondly wandering,
"On the hopeless future pondering;
"Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
"Fell despair my fancy seizes.

"Life,

" Life, thou soul of every blessing,
" Load to misery most distressing,
" O how gladly I'd resign thee,
" And to dark oblivion join thee!*"

MUSING

---

* This was written in compliment to Miss Macleod, now Mrs. Ross, a very great friend of the poet. E.

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.

Tune—"DRUIMION DUBH."

MUSING on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me!
Wearying Heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

Hope and fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to nature's law;
Whisp'ring spirits round my pillow
Talk of him that's far awa.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,
Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me;
Downy sleep, the curtain draw;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa.

BLYTHE

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben:
Blythe by the banks of Ern,
And blythe in Glenturit glen.

By Oughtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks the birken shaw;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
Blythe, &c.

Her looks were like a flower in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn;
She tripped by the banks of Ern,
As light's a bird upon a thorn.
Blythe, &c.

Her

Her bonnie face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lee;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.
Blythe, &c.

The Highland hills I've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blythest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.
Blythe, &c.

A ROSE-BUD

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

A ROSE-BUD by my early walk,
Adown a corn-inclosed bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.

Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.

She soon shall see her tender brood
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedew'd,
Awake the early morning.

So

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning.

So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watch'd thy early morning.*

WHERE

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* This song was written during the winter of 1787. Miss J. C. daughter of a friend of the Bard, is the heroine.

WHERE BRAVING ANGRY WINTER's STORMS.

Tune—"N. Gow's Lamentation for Abercairny."

Where braving angry winter's storms,
The lofty Ochels rise,
Far in their shade my Peggy's charms
First blest my wondering eyes.
As one who by some savage stream,
A lonely gem surveys,
Astonish'd doubly marks it beam
With art's most polish'd blaze.

Blest be the wild, sequester'd shade,
And blest the day and hour,
Where Peggy's charms I first survey'd,
When first I felt their power!

The

The tyrant death with grim control
May seize my fleeting breath:
But tearing Peggy from my soul
Must be a stronger death.

TIBBIE,

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

Tune—"INVERCALD'S REEL."

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
Ye would nae been sae shy;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
But, trowth, I care na by.

YESTREEN I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure:
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But fient a hair care I.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean
That looks sae proud and high.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
And answer him fu' dry.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he for sense or lear,
Be better than the kye.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice;
The deil a ane wad spier your price,
Were ye as poor as I.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I would nae gie her in her sark,
For thee wi' a' thy thousan' mark;
Ye need na look sae high.
O Tibbie, I hae, &c.

CLARINDA.

CLARINDA.

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measur'd time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie:
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy?

We part—but by these precious drops,
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps,
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day:
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

THE DAY RETURNS, MY BOSOM BURNS.

Tune—"SEVENTH OF NOVEMBER."

THE day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,
Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer-sun was half sae sweet.
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more, it made thee mine.

While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature aught of pleasure give!
While joys above, my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of life below
Comes in between to make us part;
The iron hand that breaks our band,
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

THE LAZY MIST.

THE lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear,
As autumn to winter resigns the pale year.
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick time is flying, how keen fate pursues;
How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd in vain;
How little of life's scanty span may remain:
What aspects, old time, in his progress has worn;
What ties, cruel fate, in my bosom has torn.
How foolish, or worse, till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
This life's not worth having with all it can give,
For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

O, WERE

O, WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.

Tune,

"MY LOVE IS LOST TO ME."

O WERE I on Parnassus' hill!
Or had of Helicon my fill;
That I might catch poetic skill,
To sing how dear I love thee.
But Nith maun be my muse's well,
My muse maun be thy bonnie sel:
On Corsincon I'll glowr and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

Then come sweet muse, inspire my lay,
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day,
I coudna sing, I coudna say,
How much, how dear I love thee.

I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By heaven and earth I love thee!

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;
And ay I muse and sing thy name,
I only live to love thee.
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last, weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I love thee.

I LOVE

I LOVE MY JEAN.

Tune,

"MISS ADMIRAL GORDON'S STRATHSPEY."

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

THE

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decay'd on Catrine lee,*
Nae lavrock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the e'e.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel in beauty's bloom the whyle,
And ay the wild-wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the Braes o' Ballochmyle.

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in with'ring bowers,
Again ye'll charm the vocal air.

But

* Catrine, in Ayrshire, the seat of Dugald Stewart, Esq. Professor of Moral Philosophy in the university of Edinburgh. Ballochmyle, formerly the seat of Sir John Whitefoord, now of —— Alexander, esq. E.

But here, alas! for me nae mair,
Shall birdie charm, or flow'ret smile;
Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

WILLIE

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.

O WILLIE brew'd a peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see:
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.

We are na fou, we're nae that fou,
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trow are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!
We are na fou, &c.

It

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!
We are na fou, &c.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king among us three!
We are na fou, &c.*

THE

---

* Willie, who "brew'd a peck o' maut," was Mr. William Nicol; and Rob and Allan were our poet and his friend Allan Masterton. This meeting took place at LAGGAN, a farm purchased by Mr. Nicol, in Nithsdale, on the recommendation of our bard. These three honest fellows—all men of uncommon talents, are now all *under the turf*. (1799.) E.

THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

I GAED a waefu' gate, yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
Twa lovely een o' bonnie blue.
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright;
Her lips like roses, wat wi' dew,
Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
It was her een sae bonnie blue.

She talk'd, she smil'd, my heart she wyl'd,
She charm'd my soul I wist na how;
And ay the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonnie blue.

But

But spare to speak, and spare to speed;
She'll aiblins listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
To her twa een sae bonnie blue.*

THE

---

* The heroine of this song was Miss J****, of Lochmaban. This lady, now Mrs. R*****, after residing some time in Liverpool, is settled with her husband in New-York, North America. E.

THE BANKS OF NITH.

Tune,

"ROBIE DONNA GORACH."

THE Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stately stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command:
When shall I see that honour'd land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here?

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom;
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales,
Where lambkins wanton thro' the broom!

Tho'

Tho' wandering, now, must be my doom,
Far from thy bonnie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Amang the friends of early days!

JOHN

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO.

JOHN Anderson my jo, John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your brow is beld, John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,
John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither;
And mony a canty day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:

Now we maun totter down, John,
But hand in hand we'll go;
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo.*

TAM

---

* In the first volume of a collection, entitled, *Poetry Original and Selected*, printed by Brash and Reid, of Glasgow, this song is given as follows:

John Anderson my Jo, improved,

By ROBERT BURNS.

JOHN Anderson, my jo, John, I wonder what you mean,
To rise so soon in the morning, and sit up so late at e'en,
Ye'll blear out a' your een John, and why should you do so?
Gang sooner to your bed at e'en, John Anderson my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, when nature first began
To try her canny hand, John, her master-work was *man;*
And you among them a' John, sae trig frae tap to toe;
She prov'd to be nae journey-work, John Anderson, my jo.

John

TAM GLEN.

My heart is a-breaking, dear Tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm

John Anderson, my jo, John, ye were my first conceit,
And ye need na think it strange, John, tho' I ca' ye trim and neat;
Tho' some folks say ye're auld, John, I never think ye so,
But I think ye're ay the same to me, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, we've seen our bairns' bairns,
And yet, my dear John Anderson, I'm happy in your arms,
And sae are ye in mine, John—I'm sure ye'll ne'er say no,
Tho' the days are gane that we have seen, John Anderson, my jo.

John

I'm thinking wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak a fen';
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

There's

John Anderson, my jo, John, what pleasure does it gie,
To see sae many sprouts, John, spring up 'tween you and me,
And ilka lad and lass, John, in our footsteps to go,
Makes perfect heaven here on earth, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, when we were first acquaint,
Your locks were like the raven, your bonnie brow was brent;
But now your head's turn'd bald, *John, your locks are like the snow,*
Yet *blessings on your frosty pow, John Anderson, my jo.*

John Anderson, my jo, John, frae year to year we've past,
And soon that year maun come, John, will bring us to our last:
But let na' that affright us, John, our hearts were ne'er our foe,
While in innocent delight we lived, John Anderson, my jo.

There's Lowrie the laird o' Drumeller,
"Gude day to you brute," he comes ben;
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My

John Anderson, my jo, John, we clamb the hill thegither,
And mony a canty day, John, we've had wi' ane anither;
Now we maun totter down, John, but hand in hand we'll go;
And we'll *sleep thegither at the foot, John Anderson, my jo.*

The stanza with which this song, inserted by Messrs. Brash and Reid, begins, is the chorus of the old song under this title; and though perfectly suitable to that wicked but witty ballad, it has no accordance with the strain of delicate and tender sentiment of this improved song. In regard to the five other additional stanzas, though they are in the spirit of the two stanzas that are unquestionably our bard's, yet every reader of discernment will see they are by an inferior hand; and the real author of them ought neither to have given them, nor suffered them to be given, to the world, as the production of Burns. If there were no other mark of their spurious origin, the latter half of the third line

in

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me gude hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou gied a sten;
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written Tam Glen.

The last Halloween I was waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken:
His likeness cam up the house staukin,
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come

---

in the seventh stanza, *our hearts were ne'er our foe,* would be proof sufficient. Many are the instances in which our bard has adopted defective rhymes, but a single instance cannot be produced, in which to preserve the rhyme, he has given a feeble thought, in false grammar. These additional stanzas are not however without merit, and they may serve to prolong the pleasure which every person of taste must feel, from listening to a most happy union of beautiful music, with moral sentiments that are singularly interesting. E.

Come counsel, dear Tittie, don't tarry;
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

MY

MY TOCHER'S THE JEWEL.

O MEIKLE thinks my luve o' my beauty,
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie,
My Tocher's the jewel has charms for him.
It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree,
It's a' for the hiney he'll cherish the bee,
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller,
He can na hae luve to spare for me.

Your proffer a' luve's an airl-penny,
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an ye be crafty, I am cunnin,
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune maun try.

Ye're

Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
  Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
  And ye'll crack your credit wi' mae nor me.

THEN

THEN GUIDWIFE COUNT THE LAWIN.

GANE is the day and mirk's the night,
But we'll ne'er stray for faute o' light,
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,
And bluid red wine's the rysin sun.

Then guidwife count the lawin, the lawin, the lawin,
Then guidwife count the lawin, and bring a coggie mair.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
And semple-folk maun fecht and fen';
But here we're a' in ae accord,
For ilka man that's drunk's a lord.
Then guidwife count, &c.

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout,
An' ye drink it a' ye'll find him out.
Then guidwife count, &c.

What

What can a young Lassie do wi' an auld Man?

WHAT can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the pennie that tempted my minnie
To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan'!
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

He's always compleenin frae mornin to e'enin,
He hosts and he hirples the weary day lang;
He's doy'lt and he's dozin, his bluid it is frozen,
O, dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!

He hums and he hankers; he frets and he cankers,
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He's peevish and jealous of a' the young fellows,
O, dool on the day I met wi' an auld man!

My

My auld auntie Katie upon me takes pity,
I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan:
I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-break him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan.

THE

THE BONNIE WEE THING.

BONNIE wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, was thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.

Wishfully I look and languish
In that bonnie face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonnie wee, &c.

O, FOR

O, FOR ANE AND TWENTY, TAM!

Tune—"THE MOUDIEWORT."

An O, for ane and twenty, Tam!
An hey, sweet ane and twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattlin sang,
An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.

THEY snool me sair, and haud me down,
And gar me look like bluntie, Tam!
But three short years will soon wheel roun',
And then comes ane and twenty, Tam.
An O, for ane, &c.

A gleib o' lan', a claut o' gear,
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I need na spier,
An I saw ane and twenty, Tam.
An O, for ane, &c.

They'll

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,
Tho' I mysel hae plenty, Tam;
But hear'st thou, laddie, there's my loof,
I'm thine at ane and twenty, Tam!
An O, for ane, &c.

BESS

BESS AND HER SPINNING WHEEL.

O LEEZE me on my spinning wheel,
O leeze me on my rock and reel;
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me fiel and warm at e'en!
I'll set me down and sing and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun,
Blest wi' content, and milk and meal—
O leeze me on my spinning wheel.

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot;
The scented birk and hawthorn white
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes caller rest:
The sun blinks kindly in the biel',
Where blythe I turn my spinning wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik amang the claver hay,
The paitrick whirrin o'er the ley,
The swallow jinkin round my shiel,
Amuse me at my spinning wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flairing, idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinning wheel?

COUNTRY LASSIE.

In simmer when the hay was mawn,
And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
While claver blooms white o'er the lea,
And roses blaw in ilka bield;
Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel,
Says I'll be wed, come o't what will;
Out spak a dame in wrinkled eild,
O' gude advisement comes nae ill.

It's ye hae wooers mony ane,
And lassie ye're but young ye ken:
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,
A routhie butt, a routhie ben:
There's Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonnie hen,
It's plenty beets the luver's fire.

For

For Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
I dinna care a single flie;
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye
He has nae luve to spare for me:
But blythe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wad nae gie
For Buskie-glen and a' his gear.

O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught;
The canniest gate, the strife is sair:
But ay fu' han't is fechtin best
A hungry care's an unco care:
But some will spend, and some will spare,
An' wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill.

O gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome luve,
The gowd and siller canna buy:
We may be poor—Robie and I,
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and luve brings peace and joy,
What mair hae queens upon a throne?

FAIR ELIZA.

A GAELIC AIR.

Turn again, thou fair Eliza,
Ae kind blink before we part,
Rew on thy despairing lover!
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart?
Turn again, thou fair Eliza;
If to love thy heart denies,
For pity hide the cruel sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

Thee, dear maid, hae I offended?
The offence is loving thee:
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,
Wha for thine wad gladly die!
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe:
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sinny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the poet in the moment
Fancy lightens on his e'e,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture
That thy presence gies to me.

THE

THE POSIE.

O LUVE will venture in, where it daur na weel
be seen,
O luve will venture in, where wisdom ance has
been;
But I will down yon river rove, amang the wood
sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain dear May.

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms
without a peer;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phœbus peeps
in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet bonnie mou;
The hyacinth's for constancy wi' its unchanging
blue,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller grey,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day,
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu' when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty which weel she fa's to wear,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remuve,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May.

THE

THE BANKS O' DOON.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart, thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Oft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And fondly sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause luver stole my rose,
But, ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

SIC A WIFE AS WILLIE HAD.

WILLIE Wastle dwalt on Tweed,
The spot they ca'd it Linkumdoddie,
Willie was a wabster gude,
Cou'd stown a clue wi' ony bodie;
He had a wife was dour and din,
O Tinkler Madgie was her mither;

Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

She has an e'e, she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour;
Five rusty teeth, forbye a stump,
A clapper tongue wad deave a miller;
A whiskin beard about her mou,
Her nose and chin they threaten ither;
Sic a wife, &c.

She's

She's bow-hough'd, she's hein shinn'd,
Ae limpin leg a hand-breed shorter;
She's twisted right, she's twisted left,
To balance fair in ilka quarter:
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther;
Sic a wife, &c.

Auld baudrans by the ingle sits,
An' wi' her loof her face a washin;
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
She dights her grunzie wi' a hushion;
Her walie nieves like midden-creels,
Her face wad fyle the Logan-water;

Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad na gie a button for her.

GLOOMY DECEMBER.

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December!
Ance mair I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, Oh! ne'er to meet mair,
Fond lovers parting is sweet painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, *O farewell for ever*,
Is anguish unmingl'd and agony pure.

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone;
Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, Oh! ne'er to meet me mair.

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE.

WILT thou be my dearie;
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
O wilt thou let me cheer me;
By the treasure of my soul,
And that's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow, that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine, may choose me;
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.
Lassie, let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.

SHE'S fair and fause that causes my smart,
I lo'ed her meikle and lang;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.
A coof cam in wi' rowth o' gear,
And I hae tint my dearest dear,
But woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lass gang.

Whae'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae ferlie 'tis tho' fickle she prove,
A woman has't by kind:
O woman, lovely, woman fair!
An angel form's faun to thy share,
'Twad been o'er meikle to gien thee mair,
I mean an angel mind.

AFTON

AFTON WATER.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,
Thou green crested lapwing thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear, winding rills;
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green vallies below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft as mild evening weeps over the lea,
The sweet scented birk shades my Mary and me.

Thy

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;*
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet laye,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear
wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

BONNIE

---

* Afton-water is the stream on which stands Afton-lodge; to which Mrs. Stewart removed from Stair.—Afton-lodge was Mrs. Stewart's property from her father. The song was presented to her in return for her notice, the first he ever received from any person in her rank of life.

E.

BONNIE BELL.

THE smiling spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonnie blue are the sunny skies;
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

The flow'ry spring leads sunny summer,
And yellow autumn presses near,
Then in his turn comes gloomy winter,
'Till smiling spring again appear.
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old time and nature their changes tell,
But never ranging, still unchanging
I adore my bonnie Bell.

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

WHERE Cart rins rowin to the sea,
By mony a flow'r and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant weaver.

Oh I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart would tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band,
To gie the lad that has the land,
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And give it to the weaver.

While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;
While bees delight in op'ning flowers;
While corn grows green in simmer showers,
I'll love my gallant weaver.*

LOUIS

* In some Editions *sailor* is substituted for *weaver*.

LOUIS WHAT RECK I BY THEE.

Louis what reck I by thee,
Or Geordie on his ocean:
Dyvor, beggar louns to me,
I reign in Jeanie's bosom.

Let her crown my love her law,
And in her breast enthrone me:
Kings and nations, swith awa!
Reif randies I disown ye!

FOR

FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEBODY.

My heart is sair I dare na tell,
My heart is sair for somebody;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake o' somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!
I could range the world around,
For the sake o' somebody.

Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,
O sweetly smile on somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not,
For the sake o' somebody?

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

THE lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn she cries, alas!
And ay the saut tear blins her e'e:
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear, and brethren three.

Their winding sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see;
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's e'e!
Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be;
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrong to thine or thee.

A Mother's Lament for the Death of her Son.

Tune—"FINLAYSTON HOUSE."

FATE gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierc'd my darling's heart:
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
By cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour'd laid:
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

The mother linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravish'd young;
So I, for my lost darling's sake,
Lament the live-day long.
Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
Now, fond I bare my breast,
O, do thou kindly lay me low
With him I love at rest!

O MAY, THY MORN.

O May, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet,
As the mirk night o' December;
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I dare na name,
But I will ay remember.
And dear, &c.

And here's to them, that, like oursel,
Can push about the jorum;
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's gude watch o'er them;
And here's to them, we dare na tell,
The dearest o' the quorum.
And here's to, &c.

O WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN.

O WAT ye wha's in yon town,
Ye see the e'enin sun upon,
The fairest dame's in yon town,
That e'enin sun is shining on.

Now haply down yon gay green shaw,
She wanders by yon spreading tree:
How blest ye flowers that round her blaw,
Ye catch the glances o' her e'e.

How blest ye birds that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year,
And doubly welcome be the spring,
The season to my Lucy dear.

The

The sun blinks blythe on yon town,
And on yon bonnie braes of Ayr;
But my delight in yon town,
And dearest bliss, is Lucy fair.

Without my love, not a' the charms
O' Paradise could yield me joy;
But gie me Lucy in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's dreary sky.

My cave wad be a lover's bower,
Tho' raging winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.

O sweet is she in yon town,
Yon sinkin sun's gane down upon;
A fairer than's in yon town,
His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

If angry fate is sworn my foe,
And suffering I am doom'd to bear;
I careless quit aught else below,
But spare me, spare me Lucy dear.

For while life's dearest blood is warm,
Ae thought frae her shall ne'er depart,
And she—as fairest is her form!
She has the truest, kindest heart.*

A RED

---

* The heroine of this song, Mrs. O. (formerly Miss L. J.) died lately at Lisbon. This most accomplished and most lovely woman was worthy of this beautiful strain of sensibility, which will convey some impression of her attractions to other generations. The song is written in the character of her husband, as the reader will have observed by our bard's letter to Mr. Syme inclosing this song, in Vol. ii. (1799). E.

A RED RED ROSE.

O MY luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June:
O my luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun:
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve!
And fare thee weel a-while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

A VISION.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where th' howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care.

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
*Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,
Whase distant roaring swells an fa's.

The

* *Variation.* To join yon river on the Strath.

The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win.

* By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,
And by the moon-beam, shook, to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,
The sacred posy—Liberty!

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might rous'd the slumb'ring dead to hear;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He

* *Variation.* Now looking over firth and fauld,
Her horn the pale-fac'd Cynthia rear'd;
When, lo, in form of minstrel auld,
A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd.

He sang wi' joy the former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.*

THE

* This poem, an imperfect copy of which was printed in Johnson's Museum, is here given from the poet's MS with his last corrections. The scenery so finely described is taken from nature. The poet is supposed to be musing by night on the banks of the river Cluden, or Clouden, and by the ruins of Lincluden-Abbey, founded in the twelfth century, in the reign of Malcolm IV. of whose present situation the reader may find some account in Pennant's Tour in Scotland, or Grose's Antiquities of that division of the island. Such a time and such a place are well fitted for holding converse with aerial beings. Though this poem has a political bias, yet it may be presumed that no reader of taste, whatever his opinions may be, would forgive its being omitted. Our poet's prudence suppressed the song of *Libertie*, perhaps fortunately for his reputation. It may be questioned whether even in the resources of his genius, a strain of poetry could have been found worthy of the grandeur and solemnity of this preparation. E.

THE following Poems, found among the MSS of Mr. Burns, are now for the first time presented to the Public.

Copy of a Poetical Address to Mr. Wm. Tytler, with the Present of the Bard's Picture.

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,
A name, which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected:

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal.

My fathers that name have rever'd on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still

Still in prayers for K—G— I most heartily join,
The Q—, and the rest of the gentry,
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avow'd by my country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *

But loyalty truce! we're on dangerous 'ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter,
The doctrine, to-day, that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly ev'ning dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night;
But you like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

My muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces. Do me the justice to believe me sincere in the grateful remembrance of the many civilities you have honoured me with since I came to Edinburgh, and in assuring you that I have the honour to be,

Revered Sir,

Your obliged and very humble Servant,

R. BURNS.

Edinburgh, 1787.

CALEDONIA.

Tune—"CALEDONIAN HUNT'S DELIGHT."

THERE was once a day, but old Time then was young,
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or do what she would:
Her heavenly relations there fixed her reign,
And pledg'd her their godheads to warrant it good.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred, the heroine grew:
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore,—
"Whoe'er shall provoke thee, th' encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were her fav'rite resort,
Her darling amusement, the hounds and the horn.

Long

Long quiet she reigned; till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand:*
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plunder'd the land:
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world beside;
She took to her hills, and her arrows let fly,
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

The fell Harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore;†
The wild Scandinavian boar issued forth
To wanton in carnage and wallow in gore:‡
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, no arms could repel;
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Loncartie tell.§

The

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* The Romans. † The Saxons. ‡ The Danes.

§ Two famous battles in which the Danes or Norwegians were defeated. E.

The Cameleon-savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion, and strife;
Provok'd beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life:*
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood;
But, taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learned to fear in his own native wood.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd, and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run:
For brave Caledonia immortal must be;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun:
Rectangle-triangle, the figure we'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base;
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse;
Then ergo, she'll match them, and match them always.

The

---

* The Picts.

† This singular figure of poetry, taken from the mathematics, refers to the famous proposition of Pythagoras, the 47th of Euclid. In a right-angled triangle, the square of the hypothenuse is always equal to the squares of the two other sides. E.

The following Poem was written to a Gentleman who had sent him a Newspaper, and offered to continue it free of Expense.

KIND Sir, I've read your paper through,
And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
How guessed ye, Sir, what maist I wanted?
This mony a day I've grain'd and gaunted,
To ken what French mischief was brewin;
Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin;
That vile doup-skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collieshangie works
Atween the Russians and the Turks;
Or if the Swede before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the twalt:
If Denmark, any body spak o't;
Or Poland, wha had now the tack o't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin;
How libbet Italy was singin;
If Spaniard, Portuguese, or Swiss,
Were sayin or takin aught amiss:
Or how our merry lads at hame,
In Britain's court kept up the game:

How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him!
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit Chatham Will was livin,
Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the plea was cookin,
If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin;
How cesses, stents, and fears were rax'd,
Or if bare a—s yet were tax'd;
The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera-girls;
If that daft buckie, Geordie W***s,
Was threshin still at hizzies' tails,
Or if he was grown oughtlins douser,
And no a perfect kintra cooser.
A' this and mair I never heard of;
And but for you I might despair'd of.
So gratefu', back your news I send you,
And pray, a' gude things may attend you!

Ellisland, Monday Morning, 1790.

POEM

ON PASTORAL POETRY.

HAIL Poesie! thou Nymph reserv'd!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerv'd
Frae common sense, or sunk enerv'd
'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And och! o'er aft thy joes hae starv'd,
Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud, the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but busks his skinklin patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit and lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace;
And wi' the far-fam'd Grecian share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan!
There's ane; come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
A chiel sae clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tamtallan,
But thou's for ever.

Thou

Thou paints auld nature to the nines,*
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lasses bleech their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws and braes,
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel;
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin love,
That charm, that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

ON

---

* *To the nines*—exactly. E.

ON THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR,

BETWEEN

The Duke of Argyle and the Earl of Mar.

"O CAM ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or ware ye at the Sherra-muir,
And did the battle see, man?"
I saw the battle, sair and tough,
And reekin-red ran mony a sheugh,
My heart for fear gae sough for sough,
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds
O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,
Wha glaum'd at kingdoms three, man.

The red-coat lads wi' black cockades
To meet them were na slaw, man;
They rush'd and push'd, and blude outgush'd,
And mony a bouk did fa', man:

The

The great Argyle led on his files,
I wat they glanced twenty miles:
They hack'd and hash'd, while broadswords clash'd,
And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
Till fey men died awa, man.

But had you seen the philibegs,
And skyrin tartan trews, man,
When in the teeth they dar'd our whigs,
And covenant true blues, man;
In lines extended lang and large,
When bayonets oppos'd the targe,
And thousands hasten'd to the charge,
Wi' Highland wrath they frae the sheath,
Drew blades o' death, till, out o' breath,
They fled like frighted doos, man.

"O how deil Tam can that be true?
The chase gaed frae the north, man:
I saw myself, they did pursue
The horsemen back to Forth, man;
And at Dumblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling wing'd their flight;
But, cursed lot! the gates were shut,
And mony a huntit, poor red-coat
For fear amaist did swarf, man."

My sister Kate cam up the gate
Wi' crowdie unto me, man;
She swore she saw some rebels run
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man:
Their left-hand general had nae skill,
The Angus lads had nae good will
That day their neebors' blood to spill;
For fear, by foes, that they should lose
Their cogs o' brose; all crying woes,
And so it goes you see, man.

They've lost some gallant gentlemen,
Amang the Highland clans, man:
I fear my lord Panmure is slain,
Or fallen in whiggish hands, man:
Now wad ye sing this double fight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
But mony bade the world gude-night;
Then ye may tell, how pell and mell,
By red claymores, and muskets' knell,
Wi' dying yell, the tories fell,
And whigs to hell did flee, man.*

SKETCH.

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* This was written about the time our bard made his tour to the Highlands, 1787. E.

SKETCH.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

To Mrs. DUNLOP.

This day, Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonth's length again:—
I see the old, bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
To wheel the equal dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
In vain assail him with their prayer,
Deaf as my friend, he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds;

Coila's fair Rachael's care to-day,*
And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray)
From housewife cares a minute borrow—
—That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow—
And join with me a moralizing,
This day's propitious to be wise in.
First, what did yesternight deliver?
" Another year is gone forever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion?
" The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what? what do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will time, amus'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then is it wise to damp our bliss?
Yes—all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight:
That future life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone;

Whether

---

* This young lady was drawing a picture of Coila from the Vision, Vol. iii, p. 99. E.

Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woeful night—
Since then, my honor'd, first of friends,
On this poor being all depends;
Let us th' important *now* employ,
And live as those who never die.
Tho' you, with days and honors crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
(A sight life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight pale envy to convulse)
Others now claim your chief regard;
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

EXTEMPORE,

EXTEMPORE,

ON THE LATE MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE,

Author of the Philosophy of Natural History, and

Member of the Antiquarian and Royal Societies of Edinburgh.

To Crochallan came*
The old cock'd hat, the grey surtout, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night,
His uncomb'd grizzly locks wild staring, thatch'd
A head, for thought profound and clear, unmatch'd;
Yet tho' his caustick wit was biting, rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent, and good.

POETICAL

---

* Mr. Smellie, and our poet, were both members of a club in Edinburgh, under the name of Crochallan Fencibles. E.

POETICAL INSCRIPTION

FOR

AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE,

At Kerroughtry, the Seat of Mr. Heron.

[Written in Summer, 1795.]

THOU of an independent mind,
With soul resolv'd, with soul resign'd;
Prepar'd power's proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

SONNET,

SONNET,

On the Death of ROBERT RIDDEL, Esq. of Glen Riddel,

April, 1794.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
Nor pour your descant, grating, on my soul:
Thou young-eyed spring, gay in thy verdant stole,
More welcome were to me grim winter's wildest roar.

How can ye charm, ye flow'rs, with all your dyes?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend:
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain flows round th' untimely tomb where Riddel lies.*

Yes,

---

* Robert Riddel, Esq. of Friars' Carse, a very worthy character, and one to whom our bard thought himself under many obligations. It is a curious circumstance, that the *two concluding lines* express a sentiment exactly similar to one of the most beautiful passages in the "Pastor Fido," from the 7th to the 10th line of the Monologue, at the opening of the third Act; yet Burns had no acquaintance with Guarini's work. Feeling dictates to genius in all ages, and all countries, and her language must be often the same.

E.

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe,
And soothe *the Virtues* weeping on this bier;
The *Man of Worth*, and has not left his peer,
Is in his "narrow house" for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet,
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

MONODY.

Answer to a mandate sent by the Surveyor of the Windows, Carriages, &c. to each Farmer, ordering him to send a signed List of his Horses, Servants, Wheel-Carriages, &c. and whether he was a married Man or a Bachelor, and what Children they had.

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
My horses, servants, carts and graith,
To which I'm free to tak my aith.

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew before a pettle.
My *hand-afore*,* a guid auld has-been,
And wight and wilfu' a' his days seen;

My

* The fore-horse on the left-hand in the plough.

My *hand-a-hin*,* a guid brown filly,
Wha aft has borne me safe frae Killie,†
And your auld borough mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime:
My *fur-a-hin*,§ a guid grey beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was trac'd:
The fourth, a Highland Donald hasty,
A d-mn'd red-wud Kilburnie blastie.
For-by a cowte, of cowtes the wale,
As ever ran before a tail;
An' he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pund at least.

Wheel carriages I hae but few,
Three carts, and twa are feckly new;
An auld wheel-barrow, mair for token,
Ae leg and baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spindle,
And my auld mither brunt the trundle.
For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for rantin and for noise;
A gadsman ane, a thresher t'other,
Wee Davoc hauds the nowte in fother.

I rule

---

* The hindmost on the left-hand, in the plough.

† Kilmarnock.

§ The same on the right-hand, in the plough.

I rule them as I ought discreetly,
And often labour them completely,
And ay on Sundays duly nightly,
I on the questions tairge them tightly,
Till faith wee Davoc's grown sae gleg,
(Tho' scarcely langer than my leg)
He'll screed you off *effectual calling*,
As fast as ony in the dwalling.

I've nane in female servant station,
Lord keep me ay frae a' temptation!
I hae nae wife, and that my bliss is,
And ye hae laid nae tax on misses;
For weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heaven sent me ane mair than I wanted;
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddie in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace.
But her, my bonny, sweet, wee lady,
I've said enough for her already,
And if ye tax her or her mither,
By the L--d ye'se get them a' thegither!

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I'm taking.
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;

I've

I've sturdy stumps, the Lord be thanked!
And a' my gates on foot I'll shank it.

This list wi' my ain hand I've wrote it,
The day and date as under noted;
Then know all ye whom it concerns
Subscripsi huic

ROBERT BURNS.

SONG.

SONG.

NAE gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,*
Shall ever be my muse's care;
Their titles a' are empty show;
Gie me my highland lassie, O.

Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rushy, O,
I set me down wi' right good will,
To sing me highland lassie, O.

O were yon hills and vallies mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

But

* *Gentle* is used here in opposition to *simple*, in the Scottish and old English sense of the word. Nae gentle dames—No high-blooded dames. E.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea:
But while my crimson currents flow
I'll love my highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw,
Around my highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By sacred truth and honour's band!
Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine my highland lassie, O.

Farewell

Farewell the glen sae bushy, O!
Farewell the plain sae rushy, O!
To other lands I now must go
*To sing my highland lassie, O!**

IMPROMPTU,

---

* This is an early production, and seems to have been written on Highland Mary. E.

IMPROMPTU,

On Mrs. ——'s Birth-day, 4th Nov. 1793.

Old winter with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferr'd;
What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless suns no pleasure know:
Night's horrid car drags, dreary, slow:
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English, hanging, drowning.

Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil,
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift will so enrich me,
Spring, summer, autumn, cannot match me;
'Tis done! says Jove; so ends my story,
And winter once rejoic'd in glory.

ADDRESS

ADDRESS TO A LADY.

Oh wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desart were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign;
The brightest jewel in my crown,
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

TO

TO A YOUNG LADY,

Miss JESSY L——, Dumfries,

With Books which the Bard presented her.

THINE be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the poet's prayer;
That fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindliest, best presage,
Of future bliss enroll thy name:
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare;
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend, *the Bard.*

SONNET,

SONNET,

Written on the 25th January, 1793, the Birth-day of the Author, on hearing a Thrush sing in a Morning Walk.

SING on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain,
See aged winter 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrow'd brow.

So in lone poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring ought to hope or fear.

I thank thee, author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care,
The mite high Heaven bestow'd, that mite with thee I'll share.

EXTEMPORE.

EXTEMPORE.

*To Mr. S**E,*

On refusing to dine with him, after having been promised the first of Company, and the first of Cookery, 17th December, 1795.

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
And cook'ry the first in the nation:
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
Is proof to all other temptation.

.....

To Mr. S**E,

With a present of a Dozen of Porter.

O had the malt thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit;
'Twere drink for first of human kind,
A gift that e'en for S**e were fit.

Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries.

THE

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

Tune—"PUSH ABOUT THE JORUM."

April, 1795.

DOES haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir.
The Nith shall run to Corsincon,*
And Criffel sink in Solway,†
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!
Fal de ral, &c.

O let us not like snarling tykes
In wrangling be divided;
Till slap come in an unco loon
And wi' a rung decide it.

Be

* A high hill at the source of the Nith.

† A well-known mountain at the mouth of the same river.

Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted.
Fall de rall, &c.

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a claut may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our fathers' blude the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;
By heaven the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it.
Fall de rall, &c.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch his true-born brother,
Who would set the *mob* aboon the *throne*,
May they be damned together!
Who will not sing "God save the king,"
Shall hang as high 's the steeple;
But while we sing "God save the king,"
We'll ne'er forget the people.

POEM,

Addressed to Mr. Mitchell, Collector of Excise, Dumfries, 1796.

FRIEND of the Poet tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee might beg or steal;
Alake, alake the meikle deil
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin! jig and reel,
In my poor pouches.

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,
That *one pound one*, I sairly want it:
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted
I'd bear't in mind.

So

So may the auld year gang out moaning
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hale design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket:
Grim loon! he gat me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by gude luck I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promis'd mair o't,
My hale and weel I'll take a care o't
A tentier way:
Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
For ance and aye.

Sent to a Gentleman whom he had offended.

THE friend whom wild from wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send;
(Not moony madness more astray)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part,
Ah why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

POEM

POEM ON LIFE.

Addressed to Colonel De Peyster, Dumfries, 1796.

My honoured colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the Poet's weal;
Ah! now sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty warld were it,
Would pain and care, and sickness spare it;
And fortune favour worth and merit,
As they deserve:
(And aye a rowth, roast beef and claret;
Syne wha would starve?)

Dame

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Ay wavering like the willow wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches, like bawd'rons by a rattan,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's off like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick! it is na fair,
First shewing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
O' hell's damned waft.

Poor man the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon

Soon heels o'er gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murdering wrestle,
As dangling in the wind he hangs
A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen:
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
Amen! amen!

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

TO

THE TOOTH-ACHE.

My curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang;
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Ay mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle!
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle,
To see me loup;
While raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup.

O' a'

O' a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'sts, daft bargains, *cutty-stools*,
Or worthy friends rak'd i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves, or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' misery yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, TOOTH-ACHE, surely bear'st the bell
Amang them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes of *discord* squeel,
Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoe-thick;—
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
A towmond's Tooth-Ache!

SONG.

SONG.

Tune—"MORAG."

O WHA is she that lo'es me,
And has my heart a keeping?
O sweet is she that lo'es me,
As dews o' simmer weeping;
In tears the rose buds steeping.

CHORUS.

O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer,
O that's the queen o' woman kind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie,
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Ere while thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming.
O that's, &c.

If thou hadst heard her talking,
And thy attentions plighted,
That ilka body talking,
But her by thee is slighted;
And thou art all delighted.
O that's, &c.

If thou hast met this fair one,
When frae her thou hast parted,
If every other fair one
But her thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken hearted.—

O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer,
O that's the queen o' woman kind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

SONG.

SONG.

JOCKEY's ta'en the parting kiss,
O'er the mountains he is gane;
And with him is a' my bliss,
Nought but griefs with me remain.

Spare my luve, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets and beating rain!
Spare my luve, thou feathery snaw,
Drifting o'er the frozen plain.

When the shades of evening creep
O'er the day's fair, gladsome e'e,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly blythe his waukening be!

He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he'll repeat her name;
For where'er he distant roves,
Jockey's heart is still at hame.

SONG.

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form,
The frost of Hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind.
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway,
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms,
These are all immortal charms.

Written

Written in a Wrapper inclosing a Letter to Capt. Grose, to be left with Mr. Cardonnel, Antiquarian.

Tune—"SIR JOHN MALCOM."

KEN ye ought o' Captain Grose?
Igo, & ago,
If he's amang his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he South, or is he North?
Igo, & ago,
Or drowned in the river Forth?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he slain by Highland bodies?
Igo, & ago,
And eaten like a weather-haggis?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abram's bosom gane?
Igo, & ago,
Or haudin Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the Lord be near him!
Igo, & ago,
As for the deil he daur na steer him,
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit th' inclosed letter,
Igo, & ago,
Which will oblige your humble debtor,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye hae auld stanes in store,
Igo, & ago,
The very stanes that Adam bore,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,
Igo, & ago,
The coins o' Satan's coronation!
Iram, coram, dago.

TO

ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTRY,

On receiving a Favour.

I CALL no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer, as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me, along your wandering spheres,
Only to number out a villian's years!

EPITAPH

ON

A FRIEND.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

A

GRACE BEFORE DINNER.

O THOU, who kindly dost provide
For every creature's want!
We bless thee, God of nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent:
And, if it please thee, Heavenly Guide,
May never worse be sent;
But whether granted, or denied,
Lord bless us with content!

Amen!

TO

TO

My dear and much honoured Friend,

MRS. DUNLOP, *of DUNLOP.*

ON SENSIBILITY.

SENSIBILITY how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell;
But distress with horrors arming,
Thou hast also known too well!

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
Blooming in the sunny ray:
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys:
Hapless bird! a prey the surest,
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure,
Finer feelings can bestow;
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

A Verse

A Verse composed and repeated by BURNS, *to the Master of the House, on taking leave at a Place in the Highlands, where he had been hospitably entertained.*

WHEN death's dark stream I ferry o'er,
A time that surely shall come;
In heaven itself, I'll ask no more,
Than just a Highland welcome.

FAREWELL

FAREWELL TO AYRSHIRE.

SCENES of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Scenes that former thoughts renew,
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Now a sad and last adieu!

Bonny DOON, sae sweet and gloamin,
Fare thee weel before I gang!
Bonny Doon, whare early roaming,
First I weav'd the *rustic sang!*

BOWERS adieu, whare Love, decoying,
First enthrall'd this heart o' mine,
There the saftest sweets enjoying—
Sweets that mem'ry ne'er shall tine!

FRIENDS, so near my bosom ever,
Ye hae render'd moments dear;
But, alas! when forc'd to sever,
Then the stroke, O how severe!

FRIENDS!

FRIENDS! that parting tear reserve it,
Tho' 'tis doubly dear to me!
Could I think I did deserve it,
How much happier would I be!

Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Scenes that former thoughts renew,
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Now a sad and last adieu!

GLOSSARY.

A.

ABEIGH, at a shy distance.
Airl-penny, earnest money.
Aiklent, asquint, aslant.
Athort, athwart.
Auld lang syne, olden time, days of other years.

B.

BAUDRANS, a cat.
Bawk, bank.
Beld, bald.
Ben, into the *spence*, or parlour.
But and ben, the country kitchen and parlour.
Bield, shelter.
Bien, wealthy, plentiful.
Birk, birch.
Birkie, a clever fellow.
Birken-shaw, *Birchen-wood-shaw*, a small wood.
Bleert and blin, bleered and blind.
Bleerit, bleared, sore with rheum.
Blustie, snivelling.
Bogles, spirits, hobgoblins.
Bouk, vomiting, gushing out.
Breckan, fern.
Brent, smooth.
Bughtin-time, the time of collecting the sheep in the pens to be milked.
Bught, a pen.
Burn, or *burnie*, a water, a rivulet.
Buskie, bushy.
Busks, dresses.
Buss, shelter.
Byre, a cow-house, a shippen.

C.

CALLAN, a boy.
Caller, fresh, sound, refreshing.
Canie, gentle, mild, dextrous.
Cantie, cheerful, merry.
Cesses, taxes.
Chiel, a young fellow.
Claut, to clean, to scrape.
Clavers, idle stories.
Cleeds, clothes.
Clouds, clouds.
Cockernony, a lock of hair tied up on a girl's head, a cap.
Coft, bought.
Cog, a wooden dish.
Coggie, dimin. of cog.
Collieshangie, quarrelling.
Coof, a blockhead, a ninny.
Coost, did cast.
Couthie, kind, loving.
Craik, name of a bird.
Crouse, cheerfully, courageous.
Crowdie, a dish made of oatmeal.
Cushats, doves, or wood-pigeons.
Cutty, short.

D.

DAFT, merry, giddy, foolish.
Davoc, David.
Dights, cleans.
Dool, sorrow; *to sing dool*, to lament, to mourn.
Doos, doves.
Doup, backside.
Doup-skelper, one that strikes the tail.
Dour and din, sullen, sallow.
Douser, prudenter.
Douff, pithless, wanting force.
Dowie, worn with grief, fatigue.
Doylt, stupid.
Drone, part of a bagpipe.
Droukit, wet.
Drawnting, drawling.
Drumlie, muddy.
Duds, rags, clothes.
Dunted, boxt.

E.

EERIE, dreading spirits, frighted.
Eild, old age.

F.

FA', fall, lot, to fall.
Fa's, does fall, water-falls.
Fash, trouble, care, to trouble, to care for.
Fecht, to fight.
Fechtin, fighting.
Fecket, waistcoat.
Feckly, weakly.
Fen, successful struggle, fight.
Ferlie, to wonder; a wonder, a term of contempt.
Fiel, soft, smooth.
Fient, fiend, a petty oath.
Fiere, sound, healthy; a brother, a friend.
Fleech'd, supplicated.
Forgether, to meet, to encounter with.

For-by,

For-by, besides.
Fother, fodder.
Fyle, to soil, to dirty.

G.

GART, forced to.
Gar, to make, to force to.
Gaber-lunzie, an old man.
Gademan, plough-boy, the boy that drives the horses in the plough.
Geck, to toss the head in wantonness, or scorn.
Giglets, playful girls.
Glaiket, inattentive, foolish.
Glaum'd, aimed, snatched.
Gleck, sharp, ready.
Gleib, glebe.
Glen, dale, deep valley.
Glinted, peeped.
Gloamin, twilight.
Glowr, to look, stare.
Gowans, flowers of the daisy, dandelion, hawkweed, &c.
Gowany, gowany glens, daisied dales.
Grained and gaunted, groaned and grunted.
Graith, geer.
Grat, wept, shed tears.
Gree, to agree, *to bear the gree*, to be decidedly victor.
Grunzie, mouth.

H.

HALY, holy.
Hallan, a partition wall in a cottage.
Hecht, offered.
Heckle, a board in which are fixed a number of sharp pins, used in dressing hemp, flax, &c.
Hiney, honey.
Hoddin, the motion of a sage countryman riding on a cart-horse, humble.
Hoste, coughs.
Howff, a landlady, a house of resort.
Howlet, an owl.
Hushion, cushion.

I.

ILK, or *ilka*, each, every.

J.

JINKIN, dodging.
Jouk, to stoop, to bow the head.

K.

KENSPECKLE, well known.
Ken, to know; *ken'd* or *ken't*, knew, known.
Kintra-cooser, country stallion.
Knurl, dwarf.
Kith, kindred.

L.

LAIGH, low.
Lawin, shot, reckoning bill.

Lave,

Lave, the rest, the remainder, the other.
Lav-rig, grassy ridge.
Leesome, pleasant.
Libbet, gelded.
Lift, sky.
Lilts, ballads, tunes to sing.
Linn, a precipice.
Loan, or *loanin*, the place of milking.
Loof the palm of the hand.
Loup, jump, leap.
Lugs, the ears.

M.

MAILEN, farm.
Meikle, much.
Mirk, or *mirkest*, dark, darkest.

N.

NEIVES, or *nieves*, fists.
Nowt, black cattle.

O.

OCHELS, name of mountains.
O *haith!* O faith! an oath.

P.

PAITRICK, a partridge.
Parle, speech.
Pawkie, cunning, sly.
Pettle, to cherish, a plough staff.
Philibegs, short petticoats worn by the Highlandmen.
Poortith, poverty.

R.

RAX'D, stretched.
Reek, smoke.
Reeking, smoking.
Rew, repent.
Rief-randies, sturdy beggars.
Routhie, plentiful.
Routh o' gear, plenty of goods.
Rowth, plenty.
Rung, a cudgel.
Runkled, wrinkled.

S.

SCAITH, to damage, to injure, injury.
Screed, to tear, a rent.
Shaw, a small wood.
Sheugh, a ditch, a trench, a sluice.
Shiel, a shed,
Sicker, sure, steady.
Skeigh, proud, nice, high-mettled.
Skelp, to strike, to slap; to walk with a smart tripping step; a smart stroke.
Skinklin, a small portion.
Snapper, stumble.

Sneck,

Sneck, latch of a door.
Snell, bitter, biting.
Snool, one whose spirit is broken with oppressive slavery; to submit tamely, to sneak.
Sonsie, having sweet engaging looks; lucky, jolly.
Sough, a sigh, a sound dying on the ear.
Spates, swollen streams.
Speel, to climb.
Stalwart, strong, stout.
Sten, to rear as a horse, to stride.
Steer, to molest, to stir.
Stents, tribute, dues of any kind.
Stoure, dust, more particularly dust in motion.
Stown, stolen.
Stowp, a kind of jug or dish with a handle.
Stoyte, stumble.
Swarf, swoon.
Swats, liquor.
Swith, get away.
Syne, since, ago, then.

T.

TAIRGE, target.
Tamtallan, the name of a mountain.
Tedding, spreading after the mower.
Teutie, heedful, cautious.
Theekit, thatched.
Thud, to make a loud intermittent noise.
Tine, or *Tyne*, to lose.
Tint, lost.
Tint the gate, lost the way.
Tirl, to make a slight noise, to uncover.
Tocher, marriage portion.
Trig, spruce, neat.
Trysted, appointed; *to tryste*, to make an appointment.
Trews, trowsers.

U.

UNCO, strange, uncouth, very, very great, prodigious.
Unweeting, unwitting, unknowing.
Unsicker, unsure, unsteady.
Urchin, a hedge-hog.

W.

WAFT, woof.
Wale, choice, to choose.
Walie, ample, large, jolly; *also an interjection of distress.*
Warlock, a wizzard.
Warstle, wrestling, struggle.
Waught, draught.
Wee, little.
Weet, rain, witness.
Weird, fate.
Whyles, sometimes.
Wicker, willow (the smaller sort.)

Wow, an exclamation of pleasure or wonder.
Wons, dwells.
Wrack, to tease, to vex.
Wraith, a spirit, a ghost; an apparition exactly like a living person, whose appearance is said to forbode the person's approaching death.
Wyle, beguile.

Y.

Yett, a gate, *such as is usually at the entrance into a farm yard or field.*
Yill, ale.
Yird, earth.
Yowe, an ewe.
Yule, Christmas.

FINIS.

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